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Pairings: Conversations, Collaborations, Materials



A conference at Manchester School of Art / MMU

Pairings Conference Papers

Manchester Metropolitan University

Crafts practitioners very often work in isolation. There is something intrinsically satisfying about being able to make all the decisions about the work's progress yourself, whether you are working with clay, glass, metal, textiles, digital media, something else or a combination of some of these.

And once the level of crafts-mastership has been reached, you have become an expert in the sense that Sennett discusses in his book *The Craftsman* (2009), working with your chosen materials has become instinctive or what Donald Schön terms "reflecting-in-action" (1983). This know-how has become second nature in a way that it is not consciously analysed or questioned. While it could be described as an internal monologue, this is a bit of a misnomer, as it has become ineffable and is hard to share because by its very nature it is located beyond the realm of the linguistic.

This is at once an enviable level of practice that has been reached, while at the same time somehow limiting your options. Once processes have become internalised to this extent it becomes increasingly hard to step back and see your work with an objective eye – and to question your practices.

It is this point that makes collaborations in craft so very rewarding. If you are working with somebody else, you need to communicate, explain your practices, and these in turn might be questioned by your collaborator(s). At the same time you are providing a fresh perspective on their work, which might rejuvenate what they do, but also give you inspiration for what you can do next.

This collection of papers developed out of different projects that did just that – collected through a conference that was part of an umbrella initiative called 'The Pairings Project' (which in turn would be the basis of a touring exhibition, a symposium, said conference as well as the book *Collaboration through Craft*, published by Berg in July 2013).

Funded by the Manchester Institute of Research in Art and Design (MIRIAD), The Pairings Project's aim was to allow participants to explore another dimension in their work by collaborating across disciplines, so the person (or persons) that you were working with needed to have a different material or process at the heart of their practice. Some were also across institutions (and some would reach across countries as people moved jobs and got involved in residencies, etc.). With no brief, theme or concept stipulated apart from a deadline for an exhibition opening, the purpose was

clearly to explore collaboration. It was a project concerned with process(es) rather than outcomes. In a way it was like different conversations developing – as part of the project the internal monologues of the individual participants' practices became dialogues. Their individual work became conversation starters – the internal monologues had to be carefully translated into something external, be that words, images or the sharing of processes first-hand.

What the Pairings Project did was give an insight into a variety of collaborative creative processes. The participants were all seasoned practitioners in their respective fields; no doubt they could all be described as 'expert' craftsmen. You could say that they perceived their craft as an integral part of themselves, which can be illustrated by looking at the pairing that started off the whole project: Alice Kettle left a sketchbook on Alex McErlain's desk with a written invitation to collaborate, initially by filling up said sketchbook going back and forth between them. She had drawn some hands in it and included the sentence 'draw over me if you like'. This shows what it means to be a practitioner in this expert sense: Alice identifies with her work completely. She doesn't write 'draw over my drawings', she writes 'draw over me'. In starting this collaboration she is open to the adventure of having somebody else change those drawings, and by extension her practice – and her herself!

Everybody who participated in the Pairings Project until the end (and some of these collaborations have continued beyond the exhibition) was that adventurous, happy to go through a process of significant change for them and their practice. In these individual dialogues (or should that be adventures?), exchanges were happening, ideas, materials and approaches were shared; it was experimented together; participants learned new skills, either by teaching each other or by trying out something that was new for both of them; they were exposed to unfamiliar working methods; and by explaining their own work to an outsider they saw their own practice with new eyes, questioned each other's assumptions – and their own. They had to translate their integral expert knowledge back into a linguistic, or at least tacit, form in order to share it. And in this process, a process facilitated by the creative collaboration they participated in, they found new ways of working, new techniques, approaches and materials and above all inspiration.

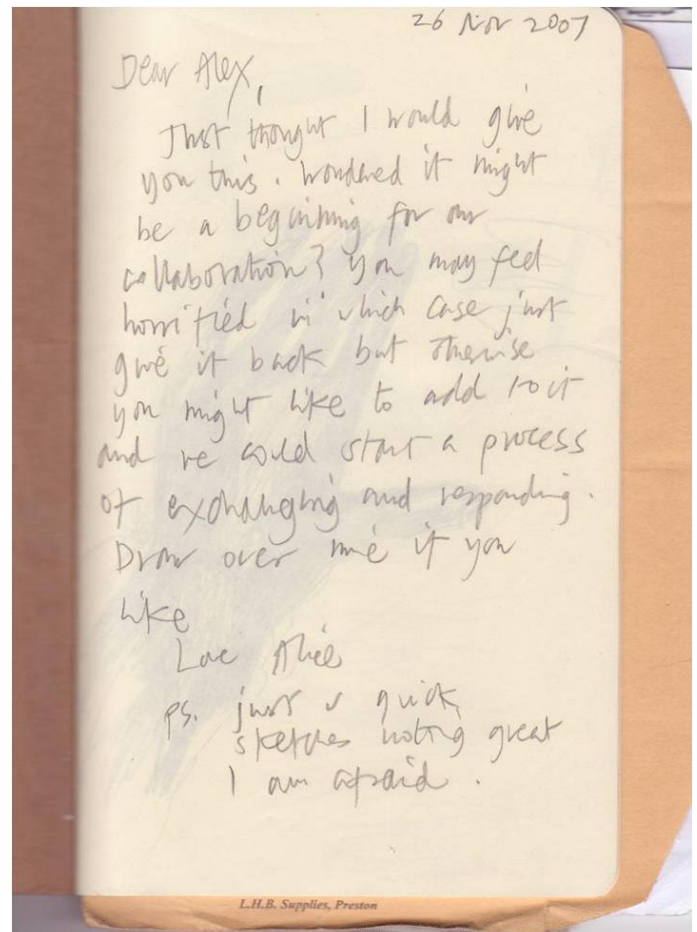
The examples of the Pairings Project, some of them discussed in the papers here, show how much coming together has the potential to explode perceived boundaries between areas of practice – definitions of craft, art or design matter as little as specific materials or techniques.

When the Pairings Project officially came to an end, the desire was there not just to share the dialogues that had developed with each other, but to become part of a larger conversation. Were there other people out there that had found the same value in collaborating through craft? This was the starting point for the Pairings conference that took place in May 2011 at Manchester Metropolitan University. The contributions represented in the papers collected here do not focus on specific areas of practice, but rather attempt to put them into context with each other through looking at them through 'collaborative eyes'. And while each of the papers is written from a specific starting point on the spectrum of creative practice – be that tied to a material or a method, a theoretical or a making perspective – in putting them together a new picture of the role of craft emerges with the potential to redefine it for the future.

All creative practice collaborations are different. Indeed just the way that people define the term 'collaboration' differs. Does it mean shared artistic decisions over a project or does it mean working on the same project, but with only a part of participants calling the shots? Is it working on the same goal, or does this include defining (and re-defining) that goal? These are complex issues that are being addressed in the crafts community at the moment. The contributors to the Pairings Conference have been thinking about and experiencing just these issues (and more) and they have put their insights into words and are sharing them with all of us – this knowledge found in translation.

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A Question of Value: Re-thinking the Mary Greg Collection

A collaborative project between Manchester Art Gallery and Manchester Metropolitan University

Sharon Blakey and Liz Mitchell

This paper will discuss the value of collaboration between art gallery and university, using the rehabilitation of a dormant collection of everyday objects as its case study. We will discuss the origins and context of the project, share the questions framing our research, and examine the benefits and legacy of the collaborative process for both parties. We will argue that such collaborations can lead to new curatorial and academic insights and should be embraced as standard practice.

Background

Manchester Art Gallery is one of the country's pre-eminent regional galleries, most famous for its world-class collection of Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian paintings. However, the collection also includes several thousand objects of decorative art and clothing, within which lies the subject of our research: the Mary Greg Collection of Handicrafts of Bygone Times.

Mary Greg (1850–1949) was a wealthy widow and collector of everyday things. She collected the domestic, the hand-crafted and the well-used, including household equipment, clothing, textiles and personal accessories. She was fascinated by the power of objects to inspire learning and creativity, particularly in children, and also collected toys, games and dolls houses. In 1922 she gave nearly three thousand objects to Manchester Art Gallery. Her association with the Gallery had begun two years earlier, on her husband's death, when he bequeathed to Manchester his own nationally significant collection of English pottery. This marked the beginning of a long and influential relationship with the Gallery, lasting nearly 30 years until her death in 1949, and documented in an archive of over 800 letters.

Origins of the project

In 2005, the Museums Association published *Collections for the Future*, a response to the growing crisis in collections storage¹. This report marked a conceptual shift in museum collecting, acknowledging the impossibility of keeping everything. A nationwide process of rationalisation and disposal began. But how to decide what should stay and what should go? What kinds of value judgements should come into play and who should have a say?

At the same time, the Gallery's Interpretation Development Manager, Liz Mitchell, was exploring new ways of interpreting the Gallery's collections.

She had first come across the Mary Greg collection 15 years previously and been struck both by the incongruous charm of the collection and the powerful narrative of the archive. Both were completely invisible beyond the institution and likely to remain so, occupying a lowly 'secondary' status within the wider collection. As part of the rationalisation process, the Mary Greg Collection was identified as a candidate for disposal. This was hotly disputed, a process that made clear the curious limbo within which the collection sat – not important enough to warrant attention but too embedded in the Gallery's history to be disposed of.

In 2006, the exhibition *Out of the Ordinary*, at Manchester Metropolitan University, showcased the work of artist-educators Sharon Blakey and Hazel Jones. In their exploration of MMU's Special Collections, both were drawn to the unacknowledged objects at the back of the cupboard: a desiccated mouse, a threaded needle, an empty frame. Sharon speaks of her work as commemorating the ordinary, 'those everyday things we take for granted that become part of the fabric of our daily lives, remaining long after we are gone'². Hazel's inspiration begins with the small and insignificant, 'a piece of fluff, a lump of gravel, a tea leaf or some string that is too small for use'³. Their interests seemed to chime with the character and content of Mary Greg's collection, the valuing of ordinary things.

Value

The question of value was the catalyst for our coming together. For nearly 90 years, the status and value of Mary Greg's collection has been in question. During her lifetime, it was displayed to great popular appeal, although not in the city centre, but at the Gallery's suburban historic house branches, Heaton Hall and Platt Hall. It attracted huge numbers of visitors⁴ and even a visit from Queen Mary, an avid collector of dolls houses. Analysis of the archive letters shows that Mary was treated with genteel courtesy by staff, although, as an independent and opinionated wealthy woman, she was not always easy to deal with.

² *Out of the Ordinary* exhibition leaflet, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2006

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Guardian*, 3.10.1932, reported 159,297 visitors at Heaton Hall for the period Jan-Sep, compared to 131,702 at the Art Gallery.

¹ Helen Wilkinson, *Collections for the Future: Report of a Museums Association Enquiry* (London: Museums Association, 2005)

After her death, the collection disappeared from view, acquiring a more anecdotal reputation amongst staff as something of a white elephant. It became easy shorthand to define the collection in opposition to that of her husband.

The Thomas Greg Collection of English Pottery is methodical, scholarly and comprehensive. It has been researched, published and is widely regarded as one of the bedrocks of British ceramic history⁵. Mary's collection is undocumented above a basic level, and has been seen as rambling and eclectic, a chaotic mix of disparate objects.

As a lone woman, Mary's representation within several museum collections⁶ is extremely unusual. Female collectors are rare in museums, and the collection does correspond in some ways to observed gender differences in collecting behaviour.⁷ Mary is a strong personal presence within the collection, in her close and well-documented relationship with Gallery staff, and in the collection's notably feminine themes (domesticity, fashion, childhood). She actively included her own life in the collection, incorporating objects she made (embroideries and toys) and family objects (her sister's passport and an aunt's inscribed dance card).

However, her energetic patronage clearly demonstrates her motivation beyond the personal. She had a strong educational and philanthropic agenda, influenced by the writings of Ruskin and his belief in the role of museums as vehicles for education⁸. She particularly identified with Ruskin's interest in 'things of the least', deliberately setting out to collect objects perceived by others to be of low value and therefore at risk of being lost for ever.

'I am very glad to know that the Bygones look so well at Queens Park and that they are enjoyed by the working class – this is just what we want....' she wrote to curator William Batho in 1930⁹, suggesting a deliberate, focused collector with a predetermined purpose.¹⁰

5 Michael R Parkinson, *The Incomparable Art: English Pottery from the Thomas Greg Collection* (Manchester, 1969)

6 Including Liverpool Museum, Sheffield Museums Trust, Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Manchester Museum, Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, the British Museum and South Canterbury Museum, New Zealand. Further research may reveal more.

7 Susan M Pearce, *On Collecting, An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (Routledge, 1995) pp.197-222

8 For a more detailed discussion of Ruskin's influence, see Alex Woodall, Liz Mitchell and Sharon Blakey, 'Mary Mary Quite Contrary', *Ruskin Review* (vol and issue details?)

9 Letter from Mary Greg to William Batho, 27 June 1930, Manchester Art Gallery archives

10 See Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (1968) p103, for analysis of hierarchies of collecting and accumulation.

We suggest that Mary Greg's collection does not fit a traditional model of museum collecting and that this may have prevented a full appreciation of its value and potential. The project *Mary Mary Quite Contrary* set out to explore this more fully.

Engagement

It began simply with a series of exploratory visits to the collections in store. These open-ended 'rummages' felt surprisingly renegade for Gallery staff. 'Rummaging' is neither a word nor an activity museums and galleries generally encourage; it doesn't sit easily with the authoritative role of guardian and narrator of material culture. But exploring the stores in the company of Sharon and Hazel, it became increasingly clear that it could be an intrinsically creative and serious act, comparable to an artist's playful experimentation in the studio. We were beginning in a small way to open up a discursive space for creative thought.

This notion led to the development of the project blog.¹¹ Could this format be used both to share the process of investigation in 'real time' and engage others in the thrill of discovery? Every self-respecting museum now has its own blog, a glimpse 'behind the scenes at the museum'. These are usually in the form of a curatorial monologue. The *Mary Mary Quite Contrary* blog began as a space in which the project partners could share and discuss thoughts and findings as they emerged. There is no single primary author, but a range of voices, threads and observations. The response to this has been enthusiastic:

What appeared to be a few minutes surfing these pages was actually two hours of pure engrossment. I was totally enthralled by the stories, the history and the objects themselves, but even more so by Sharon and Hazel's enthusiastic, unraveling, documented journey.¹²

Other researchers have happened upon the blog, contributing their own thoughts and seeking knowledge.¹³ Sharing the messy, speculative, multi-perspective and sometimes tangential pathways that research often takes has yielded unexpected value. It suggests potential for engaging the broader public with both 'live' research and stored collections.

11 www.marymaryquitecontrary.org.uk/ developed in collaboration with Manchester Digital Development Agency

12 Sarah Malone, blog comment, 11 May 2010

13 Sharon Blakey, 'A Fantastic Research Contribution', blog posting, 2 April 2010, and unpublished email correspondence with Dr Stuart Eagles, 31 March – 12 April 2010

Many of the blog entries and responses are highly personal in tone, illustrating the strong emotional tug the collection seems to exert on people:

..it happened again. What seems to happen whenever anyone is introduced to this collection for the first time – a passionate, personal, immediate response, an intensely animated conversation.¹⁴

We would argue that the combination of empirical research, intimate diary and open-ended dialogue in the blog format is particularly sympathetic to the qualities of the collection itself; personal, informal, familiar, wide-ranging, inclusive. It is an ideal medium for analytical reflection, reminiscence and conversation. Responses have been revelatory in tone, ranging from the external to the internal, the joyful to the melancholic. This has attracted the attention of other researchers. In a recent paper which uses psychoanalysis to think about museums, Dr Myna Trustram suggests that

“..the power of the Mary Greg Collection lies somewhere in the unconscious associations it might provoke in us which link us to our preverbal existence”.¹⁵

She relates this to the idea of the ‘transitional object’ developed by DW Winnicott¹⁶ and Christopher Bollas’s¹⁷ ideas about ‘nameless forms’. The powerful emotions that objects evoke is well documented.¹⁸ But to date, this thinking has been applied only to the individual and the individual object. What Trustram does is raise the potential of considering these theories in relation to museum objects, particularly objects in museum stores, in order to enable new curatorial readings. This further reveals the potential of the blog to provide a stimulating forum for the exchange of knowledge across communities of practice.

Making

From the artist’s perspective, questions of value are being considered in a series of creative collaborations, further facilitated through Sharon Blakey’s participation in The Pairings Project at MMU.¹⁹ Working with weaver Ismini Samanidou, the collection of spoons, hidden in a drawer for more than fifty years, is returned to the table. The story of a group of forgotten cotton threads is commemorated through a series of wearables and triptychs made in conjunction with jeweller Jenny Walker. A ‘Top Trumps’ card game is in development with graphic designer Jonathan Hitchin. Inspired by card games within the collection, this is intended to open up the question of value through play, exploring different value criteria in relation to the collection.

The artist’s response is an acknowledged method of breathing new life into historic collections; many museums and galleries have played with this strategy in an attempt to shift perceptions and create new relevance for a contemporary audience. It is widely accepted that artists ‘create new readings, that they step outside of the authorised perception of values.’²⁰ However, within this project we have deliberately not sought to ‘marry up’ the collection with a high-profile artist. This kind of collaboration is often more about the artist’s work than the source material, and we want to focus attention on the collection. Equally, research suggested a parallel between the lack of regard for a ‘handicraft’ collection and prevalent perceived threats to contemporary ‘handwork’.²¹ A strong affinity to craft and making resonates throughout this collection, along with the desire to inspire learning. As a maker herself, Mary believed firmly in the interconnectedness of ‘head, hand and heart’, of the fulfillment of making as a personal journey (as opposed to a professional pursuit).

Handwork can be meaningful.....some people use handwork to enter the flow state of intense and satisfying concentration.²²

14 Liz Mitchell, ‘The Mary Effect’, blog posting, 20 July 2010

15 Myna Trustram, ‘The Unconscious in the Museum: A Symposium’, unpublished paper delivered at Manchester Art Gallery, 12 November 2010

16 DW Winnicott *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971)

17 Christopher Bollas, *The Evocative Object World* (Routledge, 2009), p. 58

18 Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects, Things We Think With* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007)

19 Sharon Blakey, Ismini Samanidou and Jenny Walker in *Pairings*, Manchester Metropolitan University, 26 July – 13 Nov 2010, www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk/pairings/

20 Nick Cass, ‘What the Visitor Saw...Meaning Making, Artists and the Heritage Environment’ conference paper, *Engaging, Creating: Arts and Maker Practitioner Residences in Public Spaces*, V&A, April 2011

21 G Gibson, ‘Crafts in the Corridors’, editorial, *Crafts Magazine*, no.221, 2009, p. 3

22 B Metcalf, ‘The Hand at the Heart of Craft’, *American Craft*, Aug/Sept 2000, page 54

In accordance with this, our model has been to work within an educational environment and this, we argue, is the benefit of the artist-educator. To date we have run a number of student projects, each with a distinct flavour.²³ Notably, the most engaged responses come from those afforded direct handling of real material and privileged access to the stores. These encounters demonstrate the inspirational quality of the 'rummage', and the potency of contact with real things: the need to hold and feel and smell.

The hand knows many things. It has access to invisible relationships that are not otherwise available to us. The interactions that hands engage in provide information that is processed by normal thought. But there is also a tacit realm for which the hand is a key access gate. Imagining the hand as a gate is not so farfetched: the hand is a permeable barrier.²⁴

This we have observed, whatever the age range or experience of the participants, lending support to emerging theories of the value of object based learning.²⁵

Legacy

The impact of the project to date is most visible within the University. Working within our collaborative environment has directly connected students with the lofty world of academic research, engaging them with historic and contemporary debate. It has developed subject specific knowledge but furthermore, lateral thinking, discussion and presentation abilities, all key transferable skills. It has acquainted them with the professional world, giving greater insight into the workings of the museum and the professional life of the artist:

.... it has given me a sense of what it would be like to be a working artist. Being given the chance to talk to and present in front of curators is a really valuable experience that will help with employability.²⁶

Working as part of a mixed cohort across disciplines and year groups was similarly illuminating:

The students on other programmes had a slightly different perspective which was really refreshing, I gained a lot from talking to them about their concepts.²⁷

23 MMU BA (Hons) 3D Design, BA (Hons) Interactive Arts, BA (Hons) Textiles, years 1-3. KS3 school masterclasses in conjunction with MAG Learning Team, Professional Development workshop with Engage

24 Joel Fisher, STONE exhibition text panel, Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney, August 2010, www.stoneproject.org

25 H Chatterjee and R Duhs, Object Based Learning in Higher Education, Case Study, Learning at the Interface conference, Brighton University/V&A, July 2010

26 Year 2 student, feedback from appraisal questionnaire, March 2011

27 Ibid

The staff team has embedded this approach into the second semester of the BA (Hons) Three Dimensional Design Programme, making significant impact on the curriculum. All project options now involve a diverse group of students working to live briefs with 'real' outcomes. The example set by the blog as a discursive, critical and reflective tool has been recognised and is set to replace the traditionally word-processed Reflective Journal for the next academic year. The project has been identified as an exemplar of good practice by the Faculty of Art and Design, providing evidence for the benefits of cross-discipline collaboration, as the Faculty introduces a new Unit X module option across all its programmes of study.²⁸

Conclusions

Within the Gallery, this project has opened up a series of questions. If nobody ever opens the cupboard doors, what is the point of having all this stuff? What constitutes risk to the value of an object, and how should we balance preservation with access? Is it possible to 'rationalise' the institution of the museum, a rarefied space full of memories and ghosts? We have found ourselves asking, paradoxically, whether the very rediscovery of the collection places it at risk. In revealing the collection, have we in fact compromised its integrity? The battered and headless toy zebra from the Noah's Ark has been meticulously put back together by conservators, at once removing all trace of the narrative we originally cherished. Is something lost when a broken object is restored? Should the zebra have remained headless?

The project has been something of a tumultuous journey. The practical and attitudinal challenges to the Gallery of opening up physical spaces, in the form of off-site stores, and conceptual spaces, in the letting go of interpretive authorities, are not to be underestimated. Whilst the project was 'below the radar', it was easier to manage. Once it gained critical mass, it became harder to find the right shape for something that doesn't easily fit a standard model.

This line of enquiry has led us to question the very notion of the exhibition as outcome, our original aim. What if we turned this around, to make the public encounter with the collection a starting point rather than a conclusion? If we could expand on the open-ended model of the blog, in physical space, what new readings might emerge? And what new forms of engagement, display and interpretation would be required for this to take place?

In creative practice, risk is an essential ingredient, and the potential for failure goes hand in hand with this.

Museums and galleries increasingly aspire to risk-taking
28 Sharon Blakey, presentation for Faculty of Art and Design, Staff Development Red Day, Jan 2011

ing and experimentation in their programming, but this is often difficult to reconcile with the perceived weight of curatorial responsibility. Perversely, it is the very lack of value regarded within this collection that enabled us to be more experimental with it. The Mary Greg collection offers a unique resource for collaborative learning, where student informs research, where artist challenges curator, where museum impacts on curriculum. This embedding of one discipline into another is at the core of our research and has drawn attention from the wider community.²⁹

We would argue that there is significant benefit in formalising institutional links, perhaps considering the validation of joint units of study, embedding each institution within the other. This, we suggest, would not only provide mutually fertile ground for the artist, the curator and the educator, but also perhaps, a means of thriving in challenging current climates, our whole becoming greater than the sum of our parts.

We owe it to those who have preceded us and have left those specimens of their painstaking and beautiful work and to those who will come after us to do likewise, to treasure good work and produce something into which we have put our best, our love, our intelligence, our power.³⁰

²⁹ See Learning at the Interface conference, Brighton University/V&A, July 2010, in which the Mary Greg project was included as a case study

³⁰ Mary Greg, Preface to Catalogue of the Greg Collection of Handicrafts of Bygone Times (Manchester, 1922) pp. 5-6.

Chara Lewis, Kristin Mojsiewicz, Anneké Pettican



The collaborative practice of Brass Art is hybrid, performative and playful in nature; allowing space for the loosening of individual identities and the creation of a new collective voice. Charles Green describes the production of collaborative work as “an act of individual disappearance, born ... from the desire to neutralize the self in order to clear out a useful new working space” (2004, p.71). We see our practice is an indivisible whole that amounts to more than the summation of its parts.

We intend to focus on several aspects of our collaborative practice and a wide variety of collaborations with outside agencies, industry and other creative practitioners. To this end, we will examine the different manifestations of our creative methods in recent and ongoing projects.

For some time our focus has been to examine the nature of the double – what it means to engage with an alter ego and how we might make these playful explorations manifest through our work. Alongside our investigation of the possibilities for self-replication, we are interested in occupying and exploring resonant or inaccessible spaces. Our project at Bury Museum culminated in a body of work, including the photographic series ‘All That is Dead Quivers’ [Figure1], which represented an uncanny reanimation of long-forgotten

taxidermy specimens, and the infiltration of our own fragmented and reflected figures into the store. As Marina Warner observes “The theme [of the double] is intertwined with technologies of reproduction, first optical, then, increasingly biological. Representation itself acts as a form of doubling: representation exists in magical relation to the apprehensible world, it can exercise the power to make something come alive apparently” (2004, p.165).

Informed by these ideas of the uncanny and liminal space, we have been exploring and responding to Manchester Museum’s collections for a shadow installation commissioned by the Whitworth Art Gallery. It is significant, in the light of our purposes, that we have again been drawn to seek out specimens which had once lived and breathed and were now held in suspended animation, eschewing crafted artefacts and the ethnographic collections.

We are in the process of scanning (both laser and CT) a series of museum objects that we plan to combine with our own crafted body data taken during a research investigation into the Digital Double. This was sponsored by industry partners Wicks and Wilson and received further support from Ogle Models and Rapidform RCA as well as a number of highly skilled freelance 3D modellers.

The scanning project has been facilitated by David Gelsthorpe (and many other museum staff) who have generously supported our engagement with the collection and seen the potential of carrying ‘the doubles’ of these artefacts into another physical and metaphorical realm. Recently we took a number of objects from the museum collection to be scanned using the laser arm at MMU’s department of Engineering Services. Using the scanner enabled us to watch a 3D digital copy of each object as it emerged on the screen piece by piece. This process of removal and digitisation marked the beginning of the objects’ transformation. The data will be stitched and filled at Liverpool National Museums Conservation Technologies Department [Figure2] and printed using stereo laser sintering processes. This transformation is echoed in our own shrunken doppelgangers which are intended to interact with the objects when collectively re-animated for our revolving shadow landscape.

Our role has been as both explorers – responding to unexpected finds and physical phenomena, remaining open to shifts in the outcomes – and directors of a growing number of individuals and companies in order to realise the project. Our two-year dialogue with theatre engineer Andy Plant has led to the development of a table top with a motorised revolving light orbiting the outside, and other, future possibilities for scale-shifting smooth-moving shadows. This has enabled us to move away from using model railway sets,

which had facilitated linear light locomotion, and return the audience's focus to the shadow play.

Thanks to an extended research and development phase, the evolution of our most recent shadow play has seen the introduction of new and unexpected materials, bringing more delicate, temporary and translucent elements to create the shadows, as well as unexpected plays of light [Figure 3]. There is a greater sense of the Sublime in relation to the gigantic scale of shadow we can achieve in the space, and a preserved wonder inspired by the museum and the continuous transformations and shifting relationships made possible by the revolving light.

The phenomenology of wonder – “the experience of astonishment before the world and the beginning of philosophy” (Kingwell, 2000, p. 85) is worthy of exploration as an aspect of our encounter with the museum and the audience's experience of the final installation once the objects are re-animated. This sense of wonder comes from the overwhelming quantity of specimens, the surprising juxtapositions and revelations at the turn of a handle or the opening of a drawer. The incongruous, the unexpected, the beauty of raven skeleton's reconstructed integrity, the form of a spider, millions of years old, preserved in amber and held in the hand. The foreign, pervading smell of arrested decay.

In the final installation, light will act as an agent of wonder, creating a shadow play that completely transforms objects, which in some cases are imperceptible in their transparency.

This research is now at an advanced stage and will culminate in the creation of a new 'still life' animation for the 'Dark Matters' exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in September 2011.

Collaborative drawing has evolved to become a key method in our practice that links several ongoing projects, and continues to be a creative catalyst for new ideas and trajectories.

Our first foray into collaborative drawing produced a series titled 'Proteiform' [Figure 4]; the protean nature - to change shape and form, to become unrecognisable at will – as a notion, underpins our practice. It is balanced however, by the need to recognise us physically as individuals in the work. It is through our gestures, posture and profiles, that the notion of collaborating individuals is defined.

'Proteiform' – in which miniature cutouts of our shadowy-selves encountered the manifestations of our human psyche writ large - references the myth attributed to the origins of painting. The story is recounted by Pliny the Elder of the shepherdess who traced her lover's shadow on to a wall with her crook. Reproduced in many forms, this allegorical image has proffered the

idea that it was love itself that informed the origin of painting [Figure 5] Stoichita (1997, p.159).

The silhouette of the absent subject is depicted in line and watercolour in our drawings; the page in place of the wall. In Manchester University Museum we substituted our studio for the Entomology storeroom. Curator Dimitri Logunov generously allowed us to work with his collection in the storeroom itself, facilitating the spontaneous development of a new project. The series of drawings that followed were exhibited at the International 3 Gallery as 'The Non-existence of the Unnamed'. Zoological convention specifies that if a specimen has not been classified within the existing phylum or species in the collection then it is effectively nonexistent and unseen: invisible within the Museum. This double nature appealed to us – the possibility of being essentially 'out of place' – present and unseen at the same time; a method we have applied to our practice over the last ten years.

Our siting of the physical process of making the drawings within the entomology store was integral to the project and afforded access to a wide range of specimens. The restraints of working in someone else's workspace influenced our drawn responses – in our small, dark corner the physical contortions required both to hold poses and to capture the shadows, produced a mirroring of our surroundings – literally pinning the subject against a white surface under the glare of a spotlight.

Looking at the images we produced during these intense periods in the museum stores, we are collectively amused by their grotesque qualities. As a body of work however, they may be approached as a much darker proposition: it was our intention to confront anxieties about the processes of preservation, suffocation and dissection: of the close proximity of certain specimens and their particular qualities. The series of images shows the particular intimacy of working with the collection in this way – and our 'working intimacy' – to push and cajole, to pin and hold. It is clear we are not afraid of challenging each other, and the sometimes brutal acts or events suggested are balanced by delicate rendering in pencil and watercolour.

We enjoy the transgressive nature of these images – of pinning a tarantula as elegantly as a brooch – this is not how you treat a collection, even a teaching collection. We enjoy the shift from specimen as artefact 'modelled' by artist to the images where the artist and specimen become one morphed form. Likewise, the distorted shadow of an arm holding a stick insect starts to become a stick form. The drawings are 'framed' as tight crops – limbs disappear; faces are lost – there is a sense that the grotesque and the manipulation continue off the page. We chose to ex-

pand the scene of our handcrafted shadow play in The Myth of Origins series [Figure 6] to capture the artist's bodies more fully – like a camera pulling away from its subject to reveal the scene of a mise-en-abyme.

Retrospectively, one of the most interesting aspects for us has been the loss of self in the images – a genuine misrecognition of which of us was the subject in some of the poses has led to an almost wilful misprision regarding our self re-presentation. This blurring of forms extends our narrative as collaborating individuals – our drawing practice is a space to test out ideas that are fragile, playful, ridiculous, partial and interlinked, entangled in our extended research and interests. In a close, working relationship that does not reveal or ascribe jobs or roles to individuals, our drawing practice has become a way of 'performing' the collaborative process. It is a space where we can freely comment on the nature and assumptions of collaboration, create doubles at will, work with the most elemental technologies and make many happy and creative mistakes.

In March 2011, seven individuals gathered at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth. Ann Dinsdale, collections manager, Jenna Holmes, Arts Officer, Photographer, Simon Pantling, artist and digital collaborator Spencer Roberts and Brass Art: Chara Lewis, Anneké Pettican and Kristin Mojsiewicz. The purpose of this gathering was to initiate the project Shadow Worlds Writers' Rooms.

Our intention was to capture the space, our actions within it and the masking and unmasking of ourselves, imagined alter egos and uncanny doubles. As artists, we were to perform within this famous dwelling, exploring the notion of the original and the copy (Baudrillard, 1981), and creating a play within a play (Shakespeare, 1599). Our aim was to respond to this potential space and in the process capture a series of shadow plays using light to both cast images and to capture them.

This project advances both our personal engagement with doubling and the limen – the inbetween spaces of the physical world and the realms of our imaginations. In our reflexive practice we use many techniques. As discussed, we are adroit with drawing tools and have on occasion taken up residence in museum collections. However, we have also been passengers in hot air balloon flights, directors of endoscopic filming and performers within 3D body scanners. In short, we are drawn towards both traditional artistic materials and situations and also cutting edge contemporary technologies, which we use as a means to capture ourselves anew in uncanny circumstances.

The notion of 'expression' and 'trait' in relation to shadow selves is touched upon in the description of Lavatar's work in the field of physiognomy cited by Stoichita (1997, p.159), whereby 'expression' refers to a soul's temporary state and 'trait' to a soul's deep structure. This aspect of Lavatar's studies is interesting and relevant to our current research as our bodies shift register; performing through gesture and mood to articulate a feeling within our miniature plays. In relation to our installation Moments of Death and Revival [Figure 7.], Clare Lilley describes the Freudian sense of simultaneous attraction and repulsion inspired by the miniature masquerade of the glimpsed figures – "caught up with new grotesque mythological forms", she says, "nothing has made me realize the perceptual change between a sculpted figure and a 'real' print, formed by the co-ordinates of the artists' bodies, more than these semi-transparent resin figures. They appear to be miniature facsimiles of the artists and at first sight make you blink in disbelief". Of their shadows, she says – "Unclassifiable, these hybrids reveal the ways in which Brass Art join the real and the fantastic, observation and the imagination" (quoted in Brass Art, Skyscraping 2008 p.11).

What draws us to the shadow is that in performing, the shadow is both distinctively us, something we recognize (heimlich) and at the same time unfamiliar (unheimlich). This sense of being both familiar and unfamiliar is heightened through the use of props and disguise, enabling others to inhabit our shadow-worlds, standing alongside and between us. Thus the realm of the imagination, in its desire to see these fictive encounters between our selves and 'others' emerge and unfold, is awakened and, through our play, images and ideas emerge.

Our continued fascination with lens based tools – a method which allows us to capture ourselves faithfully – has recently led us to research the possibilities of shadow play through Lidar scanning (Brass Art, 2011) – to capture both a physical space and also a transient performance that takes place within the heart of that space. In taking our shadow world to the Brontë Parsonage, we were drawn to 'the glass town country' the imaginative world created by the Brontë children. Our engagement with the Parsonage as a location for shadow play is the inaugural work in a series, provisionally titled Shadow Worlds, Writers' Rooms. Using photography as a means to capture our sojourn into this literary space [Figure 8] we also saw an opportunity to extend this work and capture the performance that generates the work. Like a play within a play, in this mise-en-scène we have captured ourselves, the photographer and the site using custom built software created by Spencer Roberts along with Microsoft's Kinect sensor and on-range camera technology. The system provides full body 3D motion

capture and works under any ambient light conditions which made it perfect for our purposes working inside the shuttered rooms, as twilight Spring hours folded into night. In addition, the inbuilt practical ranging limits were ideal for the proportions of the Parsonage as they are designed to fit domestic gaming spaces. Furthermore, the custom built software not only offers the opportunity to capture the scene but also to later watch, angle, zoom and edit the material.

As with the Lidar scan images we initially examined [Figure 9], the system also has the intriguing potential to create its own shadow play. Shadows in each scene are created by lack of data (holes) as one object obstructs the laser allowing a shadow to form beyond or behind it. It is our intention is to use our custom built software to examine these shadowy spaces. By editing our performance within the writers' rooms we hope to herald the birth of a new form of shadow play which we will define and further examine through our creative practice.

Image References

Figure 1: Brass Art (2001) All That is Dead Quivers

Figure 2: Liverpool National Museums Conservation Technologies Department.

Figure 3: Brass Art (2011) Research and Development Phase.

Figure 4: Brass Art (2006) Proteiform No.6 (from The Myth of Origins Series) [watercolour on paper]. Held at: Private Collection.

Figure 5: Girodet-Trioson, A-L. (1829) The Origin of Drawing [engraving from the Œuvres Posthumes, Paris]. From A Short History of the Shadow, Stoichita

Figure 6: Brass Art (2009) The Myth of Origins – Mimic [watercolour on paper]. Artists Collection

Figure 7: Brass Art (2008) Moments of Death and Reveal [installation]. Artists Collection

Figure 8: Brass Art (2011) Shadow Worlds, Writers' Rooms, Brontë Parsonage. Image - Simon Pantling

Figure 9: Unknown (2011) Lidar Scan Image.

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Jason Cleverly and Tim Shear

Abstract.

In recent years there have been a growing interest in creating interdisciplinary collaboration between artists, scientists, curators and academics, and we have witnessed the development of a number of unique, site-specific initiatives in museums and art galleries.

In this paper, we discuss the background and ambitions that have informed the creation and installation of an interactive craftwork designed to engender new forms of visitor engagement. In particular we discuss the design development and implementation of Interactive Table and Escritoire, created for the House of Words exhibition at Dr Johnson's House, London. 2009.

This project was formed around an invitation to submit a proposal for an exhibition at Dr Johnson's House London. The 'House of Words' exhibition was held during summer of 2009 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Dr Johnson's birthday. Dr Johnson is famous for compiling the most influential dictionary in the history of English language, published in 1755. The house built, in 1700 and one of the few residential houses of its type still surviving, containing panelled rooms, period furniture and paintings.

A design project proposal initiated by Jason Cleverly, an applied artist with a track record of working on museum interactives and interpretives soon became an interdisciplinary project, Cleverly, having to adapt to working within the constraints of web servers, virtual machines and high-resolution print, drew on the support of Tim Shear, a research technologist. The motivating rationale for this paper is to document the life cycle of a collaborative design project and to contribute an ongoing investigation understanding of the attendant design sensitivities arising from this project.

We will evaluate the integration of: Digital Pen and Paper, live website, decorative craftwork and the resultant novel augmented paper based interface. We hope to examine the design processes as sum of it collaborators, which include: the applied artist, technologist, commercial partner, museum curator/moderator, social/computer scientists and museum visitors. Interdisciplinary collaboration enables the production of works of craft that creates and encourages contributory co-participation and collaboration. The paper will explore these forms of collaboration that both inform the production and response to the installations and discuss the ways in which the different disciplines provide the foundation to rethinking how people respond to works of art and craft.

Website

www.drjohnsonsgarret.net

Keywords

Digital Pen and Paper, Craft, Collaboration, Design, Dr Johnson, Interpretive, Interactive, Interdisciplinary, Interface, Transdisciplinarity, Museum, Open Source, Visitor Engagement, Design Sensitivities,

1. Introduction.

Dr Johnson is largely remembered for his dictionary, which was compiled and written at 17 Gough Square in the City of London now the Dr Johnson House & Museum. The process of developing this work relied on gathering together etymological information from a range of sources, and relied on the help of a number of clerks or amanuensis, and large table that could be used standing up. The dictionary was completed in about nine years and contained in the original 42,773 words, with the innovation of definitions and illustrative quotations. The Project was deployed in the top floor or Garret, this being the actual room where Johnson worked.

The installation was a playful recreation of Johnson's furniture (including a table, escritoire, book and inkwell), augmented with technology (Fig. 2 & 3). The DP&P system used in developing this project offers an attractive and suitable combination of traditional media (pen and paper) and digital and Internet based technology. The pen is able to read tiny watermarked dots on special paper, which enables the capture of drawings and writing via a USB Inkwell. The pen has related software that can translate handwriting into text-based data, which is transmitted to a database and then available to view via Internet. The special paper is customised to create a proforma, allowing different tasks to be performed when certain areas are written on. The visitor is encouraged to add words of their own devising or to write idiosyncratic definitions of existing words to add to a collaborative online dictionary.

The installation was a playful recreation of Johnson's furniture (including a table, escritoire, book and inkwell), augmented with technology (Fig. 2 & 3). The DP&P system used in developing this project offers an attractive and suitable combination of traditional media (pen and paper) and digital and Internet based technology. The pen is able to read tiny watermarked dots on special paper, which enables the capture of drawings and writing via a USB Inkwell. The pen has related software that can translate handwriting into text-based data, which is transmitted to a database and then available to view via Internet. The special paper is customised to create a proforma, allowing different tasks to be performed when certain areas are written on. The visitor is encouraged to add words of their own devising or to write idiosyncratic definitions of existing words to add to a collaborative online dictionary.



Fig.1 Dr Johnson's House, 17 Gough Square, London.



Fig.2 The Book.

Fig.3 Ecology of artifacts in use.

Cleverly was determined to examine the dictionary compilation process, and how the creation of a work of such importance and lasting impact by Johnson contrasts and compares with a number of current preoccupations:

Contemporary search engines and databases notably Wikipedia and particularly perhaps its sister project Wiktionary, which rely on contributions from the online community to shape and edit the contents.

The notion that language is evolving and expanding continuously, and relies on an ever increasing series of subjective definitions emerging from popular culture, youthspeak, and emerging technology.

The perceived decline of paper and pen as a medium.

An influence for the piece, subsequently entitled 'Interactive Table and Escritoire' and its attendant website, was informed by a previous project 'The Lost Cosmonaut'.

The Lost Cosmonaut is an art-science collaboration as part of the Artists-in-Labs program initiated by the HGKZ (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Zurich)... The Lost Cosmonaut is an interactive narrative based on digitally enhanced paper... The story in this narrative environment reveals itself partially through written text and images on the paper surface just as any other printed story. However, additional information in form of digitally controlled outputs such as sound, light and projections can be accessed through interaction with pen and paper...

...The story in this narrative environment reveals itself partially through written text and images on the paper surface just as any other printed story... The Lost Cosmonaut: An Interactive Narrative Environment on the Basis of Enhanced Paper. (Vogelsang, Signer, 2005)

The Lost Cosmonaut project confirmed our interest in combining Digital Pen & Paper technologies with web 2.0 methodologies, for the collaborative production of a modern re-creation of Dr Johnson's dictionary: a physical interface to an ersatz wiki. The use of the digital pen and paper affording the production both digital and handwritten text is attractive; as it provides a kind of satisfying anachronistic combination of old and new.

1.1 Aim and objectives.

Initial motivating aims of the piece were to:

- Enhancement of visitor experience to museum
- Increase visitor numbers during the exhibition.

- Create a new craftwork that interweaves digital media technologies within a tangible object, to engender, participation and enhance and interpret the work undertaken by Dr Johnson

- Augmenting a sense of place, locatedness, evoking the significance of Dr Johnson's endeavour and legacy.

Whilst, this paper aims to:

- Identity and highlight areas of design sensitivity that arose during project development

- Examine how the collaborators shaped the project from design to museum, to web, and unpick their impact on the content generated; with particular focus on the partnership of Cleverly and Shear.

2.0 Background.

Ward Cunningham regarded as the pioneer of the wiki, introducing his wikiwikiweb in 1995, presented the "Design Principles of Wiki": during a 2006 keynote

"Wiki Design Principles: Open, Incremental, Organic, Mundane, Universal, Overt, Unified, Precise, Tolerant, Observable, Convergent."

In reviewing Cunningham's Wiki design principles, four of them stand out as a significant to the design configuration and ambition of the Interactive Table and Escritoire.

"Organic Principle (co-evolution) - The structure of the site is expected to grow and evolve with the community that uses it.

Mundane Principle (undistracted) - A small number of conventions provide all necessary formatting.

Universal Principle - The mechanisms of editing and organizing are the same as those of writing so that any writer is automatically and editor and organizer.

Observable Principle - Activity within the site can be watched and reviewed by any other visitor."

Another facet we wished to employ in the design, closely allied to ubiquity of a Wiki is the notion of the 'Calm Interface' in order that the museum visitor's to engage with the 'Interactive Table and Escritoire' in an intuitive, familiar manner.

Cleverly was clear he wanted to be sensitive to the unique environment of the museum by augmenting the sense of place, or locatedness and evoke to some degree the significance of the scale Dr Johnson's original project back in 1755.

We must learn to design for the periphery so that we can fully command technology without being dominated by it...

...The periphery connects us effortlessly to a myriad of familiar details. This connection with the world we call "locatedness", and it is the fundamental gift that the periphery gives us.

(Weiser, Seely Brown, 1996)

Weiser and Seely Brown's paper 'The coming age of calm technology' presciently outlines this 'locatedness' that we aimed to achieve in our work on the Dr Johnson project in embedding open source Web 2.0 technologies into the piece.

Discussing the potential of digital Bookmarking, the use of PDAs, kiosks and websites by visitors during their movement around museums to record and save

data of personal interest or relevance. Filippini-Fantoni & Bowen suggest the obvious attractions and increasing prevalence for museums and collections of a move towards the extension of the Museum experience beyond the visit.

The ability to save an important part of the content encountered during the museum visit and access it at home or in another context allows the visitor the possibility of focusing more on discovery and the aesthetic experience while in the museum and to leave the more traditional didactic aspects for later.

(Filippini-Fantoni, Jonathan Bowen 2007)

3.0 Design Sensitivities.

Cleverly relying on a historical portrait or mise en scène, which informed and defined the aesthetic approach, then began collaborating within an interdisciplinary environment, to work out the rules for new mediums (web and tangibles) he was now designing for. Creating an ecology based on the Johnsonian artifacts, the design process also drew upon reproductions of Johnson own handwriting¹ laser etched into the birch-ply table. Once the concept of conflating historical and contemporary writing tools was devised a digital palette was developed informed by other cues from the ecology of artifacts, which cascaded through, the: Table, Escritoire, Book, Digital Paper, USB inkwell, the embedded screen graphics and fonts.

"Sensitivities suggest relevant issues and inspire creative design, rather than imposing rigid rules on the design. Sensitivities do not impose pre-determined solutions, but rather define spaces for discussion on how the design of interaction could deal with the issues that they express."

Ciolfi, L. (2004): "Situating 'Place' in Interaction Design: Enhancing the User Experience in Interactive Environments". PhD. Thesis, University of Limerick.

¹ By kind permission of the Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

3.1 Key Design Sensitivities:

- The environment, Dr Johnson's House, resulting in the development of an ecology of artifacts used by Cleverly to embed the piece into the Garret.
- The project scope: we focused on the augmented paper interface in the museum, and did not want to devalue that experience by allowing entries via the website.
- Whilst technology is embedded in the user's periphery, there is no ambition to obscure reliance on the digital.
- Embedding protocols in the proforma (digital paper) was a significant collaborative moment in the project, requiring input from all key collaborators, as this was the point the procedures of participation for the whole project were coded
- Technical constraints of the DP&P system
- The necessity to build in the ability to moderate visitor input, in case of indecent words or drawings.

A hand-drawn sketch of a proforma form. The form is divided into four main sections. The top section is labeled 'Word or Phrase' and contains a row of 12 small rectangular boxes. Below this, the form is split into two columns. The left column is labeled 'Meaning' and contains several horizontal lines for writing. At the bottom of the left column is a section labeled 'Your Name (optional)'. The right column is labeled 'Picture (optional)' and is a large empty rectangular box for drawing.

Fig.4 Proforma.

Fig 5. CAM processing.



4.0 Design, Development and Construction.

4.1 Tangible Design and Construction.

The scheme of a table and a book was conceived at an early stage in design development, and in some ways was a rather straightforward choice of composition given the location, however the concept was formulated to accommodate embedded content and a calm interface as discussed elsewhere, and could be arranged sympathetically and easily within the given space, whilst affording a variety of extended configurations as the collaborative, shared design emerged.

The idea of a large, high table emerged from contemporary accounts, describing how Johnson equipped the well-lit garret with long trestle tables, in order to spread out documents and work with his staff on the dictionary assembly and compilation.

Research into contemporary furniture revealed a curious lack of information on the exact items of furniture used by Johnson, images of Johnson at work are often later, celebratory and slight in regard to accuracy. However assumptions could be made about approximate style and function. The design was largely informed by examinations of a small amount of furniture extant in the Johnson house, and images of contemporary

items both photographic and illustrative. A wealth of Georgian prints and drawings informed the composition. Satirical portraits by William Hogarth, and Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman Cabinet-makers Director*¹ (1754, re-print Dover books 2000), revealed an aesthetically pleasing use of crosshatching and stylized perspective, in the case of the Chippendale directory this is a deliberate projection used to show clients a range of views in a single image.

The design, informed by two-dimensional images, was to be regarded as a kind of stage set, as if drawings had been cut out and re-assembled; an indication of the original table and an *escri-toire*. The construction of the work included the deliberate use of CAD/CAM: the structure of the furniture was made with a CNC Router, and the *trompe l'oeil* surface details using laser etching. The employment of digital processes is to be seen as a counterpoint to the digital/analogue pen and paper.

¹ Thomas Chippendale became the first cabinet-maker to publish a book of his designs, titled *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*. Three editions were published, the first in 1754, followed by a virtual reprint in 1755, and finally a revised and enlarged edition in 1762.

4.2 Virtual Design and Development.

Working from Cleverly's original brief, Shear searched for an Anoto server based solution; Anoto server products can be coded to process the captured form data. It soon became clear that no pre existing product would work for the concept, but XMS Penvision's Formidable server could be configured to our requirements. Shear then proceeded to negotiate with XMS Penvision and it's UK suppliers, eventually bringing Celtic Internet in as the Digital Pen and Paper consultants to sponsor the project.

Utilising Celtic Internet's product knowledge, Shear carried out a risk assessment for the technology that was to power the piece, which resulted in a very bespoke use of the Formidable server. The most risky issue was the unknown, but reportedly basic Internet connection in the garret, without a constant stable connection, the piece simply would not run. In order to control the risk we decided to build: the Formidable server, the Digital Pen drivers, the Drupal powered ersatz Wiki, the bespoke web services and Adobe Flash client used to power the Display all into the Escritoire, enabling the piece to run with or without Internet.

As previously stated one of our core design sensitivities was the museum's requirement to moderate visitor input before publishing entries to the web. The server embedded in the Escritoire processed entries to the dictionary within seconds to a Johnsonian style screen, independent from the publicly viewable website. The actual online site (drjohnsonsgarret.net) was only updated once the museum curator had approved the entries via a separate content management screen, and synchronised the local dictionary with the online version; this obviously did require an internet connection, for the exhibition we patched in a Powerline Ethernet connection to the garret room in the house.

4.3 Augmented (Proforma) Design.

Perhaps the element of the work requiring most collaboration in design, and the most critical for visitor engagement was the proforma. Shear was able to make different areas of the paper active in collecting visitor entries, whilst Cleverly was concerned with the visual quality of the form, and together they worked on visitor intelligibility. The design had to account for the creation and spelling of new words; and the conflict with software spelling correction systems. Iterations of the form



Fig 6. Worktable and Escritoire.

were tested on subjects, and the final design included written instructions as part of the page layout. Working together on the form Cleverly and Shear were able to develop a perhaps the most significantly collaborative element of the work.

4.4 Escritoire Display and Website.

Shear used graphics, fonts and logic from the proforma to develop the software that ran the digital display in the Escritoire, in keeping with the Johnsonian aesthetic of the piece. Outside of the Garret, the website although using the same graphics and colours from the form, was published with an almost default Web 2.0 interface; corresponding to design sensitivities, in order not to obstruct the Web 2.0 ness of the work.

5.0 The Career of the Installation Through its Collaborators.

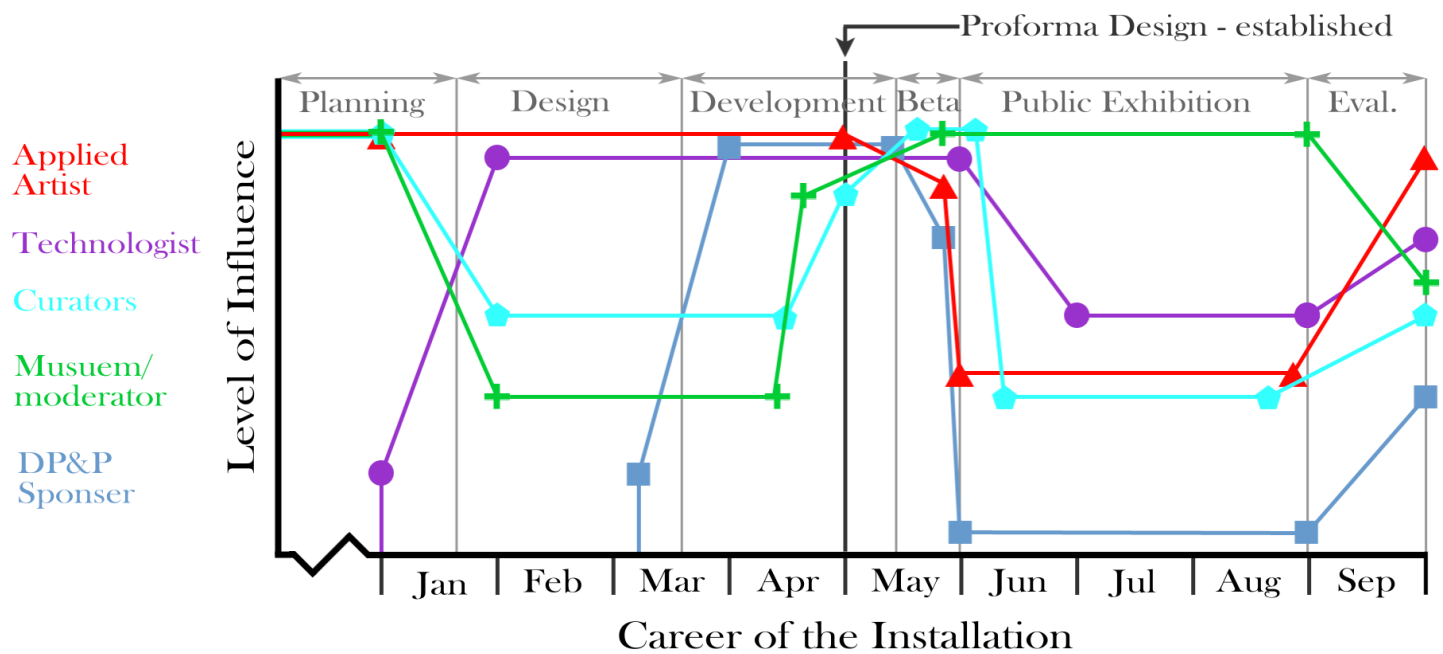


Fig.7. Collaborator's level of influence during the career of the installation.

Clearly the exhibition curators and the applied artist (designer) hold both the influence and power during the Planning & Commissioning stage. Cleverly had worked on the proposal, only starting the collaborative journey in 2009. In order illustrate the collaboration we need to make the distinction between influence and power, as figure 5 charts influence only, throughout the collaboration process power (the authority to sanction deliverables) resided with the artist, exhibition curators and the museum.

5.1 Shifting influences, threshold moments.

Of particular interest is how the level of influence shifts through the: initial design, design and development, exhibition setup, public exhibition and evaluation stages. With each new collaborator, at least one threshold moment occurred making their level of influence clear. The main threshold moment for us was the design of the pro forma for the digital paper, this was the first point all the major collaborators influence became clear. Working across disciplines can become challenging unless you either immerse yourself in that discipline, or collaborate closely with someone in

that discipline; small details can quickly become major challenges. What seemed like a simple task in designing a proforma, rapidly turned into a problematic process accommodating the previously described key design sensitivities. Our solution, required close collaboration with the DP&P supplier and sponsor Celtic Internet: to make the pro forma work to requirement, allow users to make up new words, allow the captured data to flow through the servers to the embedded screen and on to the website. Most importantly, Celtic Internet undertook the high-resolution colour print run of the digital paper used. The simple proforma generated an 80 Gigabyte print file, with sample prints taking ten minutes per page on non-industry laser printers. A Drupal powered content management system was built into the design allowing the museum staff simple access to moderate entries; those entries were then served to the screen in near real-time (in reality there was a 15 second processing delay). As an Internet connection was not guaranteed the local database used by the piece was uploaded to the public website, pending approval by the moderator.

5.2 Paradigm transition of influence.

The Exhibition Setup (Beta fig.5) was the paradigm transition of influence for the collaborators; the role of the museum/moderator now clearly emerged. A shift in influence occurred when Cleverly, after conceiving and setting up the physical structure of the piece, took a more minor role, leaving Shear to work with the moderator to ensure the stability of the installation during the exhibition; Celtic Internet and the exhibition curators having completed delivery respectively became less involved.

During the public exhibition stage (June to August), both the moderator and most importantly the visitors became very influential, effectively leaving the previously highly influential collaborators on the sidelines, including both Cleverly and Shear. A key design sensitivity now emerged forcefully: the removal of material considered vulgar or indecent by the moderator, this bowdlerization process informed the legacy of the work as viewable on the web based archive

6.0 Results: the collective output from installation and observations.

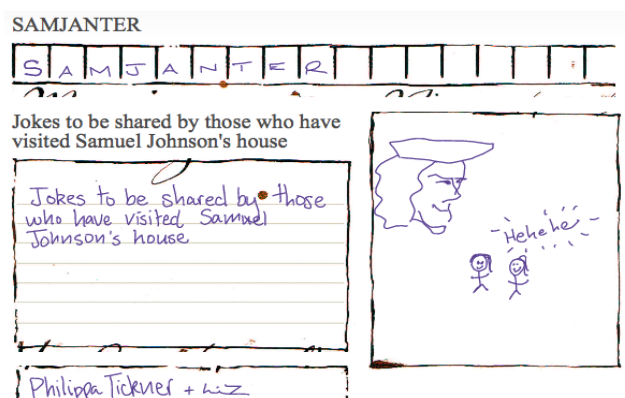
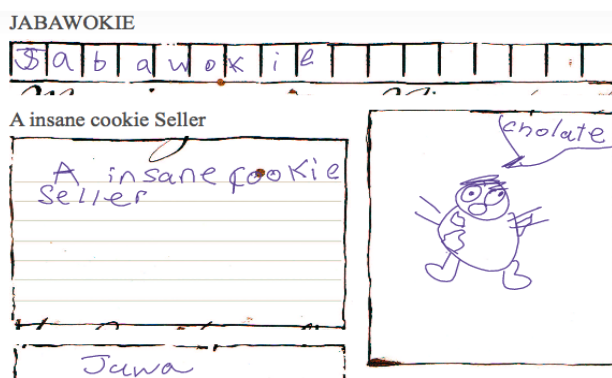
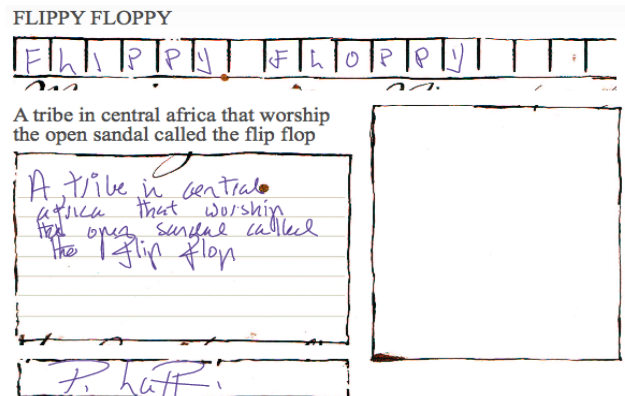
It was always appreciated that visitor numbers would not be high; as it's fair to say traditionally the museum does not have large flow of visitors. The final count was 742 entries from the exhibition uploaded to the www.drjohnsongarret.net site, all of which were approved by the moderator. With hindsight we should have requested, unapproved entries were not deleted so we had true idea of all the entries; but the moderator was quite open-minded.

6.1 Visitor Numbers.

In regard to actual visitor numbers, below is the response from the exhibition curator...

"I can report that the Trustees of Dr Johnson's House have been thrilled to discover how much their visitor numbers increased over the period of the show. In comparison to the same months in 2008 there was a 28% increase in June 2009, a 30% increase in July and a whopping 75% increase in August."

Fig.8. Examples from <http://drjohnsongarret.net>



The Interactive Table and Escritoire was one of seven works that part of the House of Words exhibition, and much contingent publicity around Johnson tercentenary, so this cannot be contributed directly to the this one work alone.

6.2 Web Analysis.

A conscious design decision was taken that the only way to add content to the site would be through the digital pen interface in the museum, one aim was to increase visitor numbers at the exhibition. We considered opening it up to allow users online to contribute to the collaborative dictionary, but firmly believed the value in this project was in the tangible interface in the museum, and did not want to devalue that experience allowing entries via the website. Analysis of web statistics are disappointing, although we did have a 290% increase in unique visitors from July to August. It is worth noting that apart from a relatively discrete invitation to visit the URL on the bottom right of the embedded installation screen, and other exhibition specific print material, we made no attempt to promote the site.

The limited number of online visitors we had appeared to use the generic Drupal interface to look up their own word, before moving on, with the average time on site in August of 3:11 minutes. For the record in August we had 223 approved entries submitted to the site by Dr Johnson's house and 249 unique visitors to the site, but as all entries at the museum and site visits are anonymous we cannot ascertain the relationship between the two.

6.3 Fragmented and Distributed Visitor Collaboration.

A concurrent videoethnographic study of the installation (pending publication), conducted by Menisha Patel, a PhD student at Kings College London; primarily focuses on the methods of word construction employed by visitors. From video evidence it would appear that visitor collaboration in constructing words was fragmented and distributed (non-linear) as opposed to site-specific, and in most cases did not rely on real-time co-participation. Many visitors used the paper-based book to review previous entries, rather than the limited rolling 8-12 entries on the embedded screen. After consulting the book or screen, some visitors would then make an entry; hence we're describing this as 'fragmented and distributed visitor collaboration'.

7.0 Conclusions.

To reiterate the primary motivation for this paper: to identify and highlight cases of design sensitivity, whilst examining the impact on content as a result of the input the collaborators had on the project. Earlier we identified key design sensitivities around the project, in short there is recognition of the need to balance: artistic vision, curatorial duty (moderation) and technical constraints. By illustrating this compromise identified as the most significant threshold moment (Fig.5 pro-forma design): when the transition of influence became clear; the key moment coded the functionality of the digital paper which in turn informed the layout and design of the book, used by the Interactive Table and Escritoire. Not only did this significant threshold moment, inspire close examination of the installation's career; it also highlighted the importance of this moment, as at this point we coded the procedures of participation.

The procedures of participation are the result of collaboration, and although fixed at a point in the design and development, the collaborators level of influence rose and fell through the career of installation, resulting in the massive shift of influence during the exhibition to the museum.

Our results, some not anticipated, can all be traced back to trade offs made when designing the procedures of participation: as they shaped the design, development, use and moderation of the installation. We acknowledge an ignored opportunity to develop a more web 2.0 collaborative website, or true Wiki, choosing instead to reinforce the value of the tangible interface, preserving exclusivity and enhancing new forms of participation in the museum. Retaining the ambition not to obscure the digital nature of the piece, whilst showing sensitivity to the museum's visitors: affording a calm interface within which to participate in an online work. We have deduced that embed-

ding the digital pen and paper in the design of the installation, helped move the focus of collating yet another online dictionary into the periphery of the museums visitors' using the piece. The web statistics suggest a large number of the users were either unaware of the wiki element of the website, simply less interested in the online element of the collective work.

Collaborative design is all pervasive, for example in film production or car design; these rely on teams of specialists engaged in Fordian division of labour. But what might be considered more unique within collaborative design is the manifestation of small-scale curious and engaging design projects, museum interpretives with site-specific constraints aimed at informal learning, that continue afford implications for the wider use of calm interfaces and embedded technology.

As the pairing engaged with such a project we consider that an individual designer would approach our design problem differently. Working as a team we formatted a deliberate balance to the tangible, to concentrate the on an evocation of Dr Johnson's working and domestic environment. Our deployment of a calm interface was a nuanced alternative to a more mainstream Wiki experience, to considered as more Craft 2.0 than Web 2.0.

The visitor flow in the Garret itself, on the fourth floor of Dr Johnson's House, when combined with the procedures of participation, created what we describe as fragmented and distributed visitor collaboration. We think this fragmented and distributed visitor collaboration is the new form of engagement aimed for, allowing museum visitors to collectively or individually participate with a digitally augmented museum exhibit, or augmented craft.

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Abstract

In 2009 Arts Council England supported a collaborative project focused on the Comrades Club, Adelaide Street, Blackpool. The funding for Blackpool Vistas 09 facilitated collaborative work by an art historian and a fine artist, the former investigated the Club's archives and the latter responded to the findings of the theoretical work with visual work and an on-site installation. The Blackpool Vistas 09 project also used the fabric of the Comrades Club and involved collaboration between the two key practitioners, members of the Club, artists, academics, students and local schools.

Instigated and co-ordinated by a 'contextual practitioner' the successful bid to the Arts Council was the culmination of a three year interdisciplinary investigation into visual representations of the Blackpool context that brought academics, practitioners, curators, undergraduate and postgraduate students together to share work based on their perceptions of the town. The work produced included photographs, typography, video, paintings and sculpture and was exhibited at several venues across the town in addition to being presented at three symposia which were part of the Blackpool Vistas Arts Festivals held in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

This paper looks at the role of contextual practice in the Blackpool Vistas project and highlights the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural communication and creativity employed. It argues that, as with the Blackpool Vistas project, undergraduate and postgraduate research cultures can be fostered through a Critical and Contextual Studies curriculum that offers space for the development of research skills, interdisciplinary contact, the articulation of individual practitioners' identities through the selection and presentation of visual and written material, and engagement in collaborative work.

The Blackpool Vistas project is a practical example of the successful integration of theory and practice. Here the traditional positioning of Critical and Contextual Studies (CS) modules on the 'periphery' of Art and Design programmes, being delivered by a team of theorists working across disciplines, is presented as a positive for the promotion of collaborative activity. This paper also demonstrates how CS activity can be used as a vehicle for developing interfaces between students, academics, artists, the wider community and funding bodies and explores how this approach presents a profound paradigm shift for this subject area, from theoretical studies to 'live' project work.

Introduction

This paper deals with three related areas of activity: Art practice; art education and contextual practice. It describes the role and influence of these in the Blackpool Vistas project and, in doing so, prompts reflection upon, and discussion of, collaboration; interdependence and the role of critical and contextual studies in curricula that educate for art and design practice. Where possible, appropriate academic references are used but much of the information presented here is drawn from primary sources; direct personal experience; action; observation and from two decades of involvement in the delivery of Critical and Contextual Studies in Art and Design in Higher Education.

'Pairings' the concept underpinning this conference, encourages reflection on collaboration and upon aspects of creativity resulting from juxtapositions and contact with others. The importance of the interconnectedness of creative individuals with things outside of themselves is occasionally acknowledged in biographies, monographs and exhibitions where concessions may be made to 'influences'. Design histories and the social history of art have their respective niches, but generally, the notion of the creative, talented individual still dominates the vast majority of documentaries, books and exhibitions about the visual arts. Our Higher Education system mirrors these concerns with the normal culmination of three years of undergraduate study being the student's 'final show' and the Final Major Project (FMP) which demonstrates the creativity and skills acquired by the individual. Whilst undergraduates are usually required to contextualise their work and (possibly) relate it to 'real' scenarios the main emphasis of contemporary degree courses is upon the individual and their product(s).

Over the last twenty five years there have been intermittent attempts by historians, authors and TV programme makers to expose the inter-relationships between the arts and the worlds of culture, journalism, finance and publishing and to demystify the notions of greatness and intrinsic worth that myths of artistic genius are founded on. Notably Joseph Alsop's lengthy text on the Rare Art Traditions (1982) Louisa Buck's *Relative Values* (1991) and more recently Julian Stallabrass's *Art Incorporated* (2004). These texts describe the key role played by those who contextualise work, by presenting, pricing, selling and writing about art and describe how, through these interactions worth is conferred and a 'value' for art work is acquired. 'Contextual Practice' is thus the means by which an audience is created and prepared to receive visual work.

Art schools have their own ways of contextualising the work that their students produce. One example is the conferment of awards (BA Hons, MA & PhD) which are badges of individual achievement that situate the work produced by the student within an international context of academic standards that give a framework of 'worth' (QAA 2011). In this country the idea of linking art practice to cerebral status can be traced back to the late eighteenth century and artists' and crafts persons' desires to associate intellectual prowess with the activity of making 'art' and to the activities of those, such as the engraver William Hogarth, who pressed for the foundation of a Royal Academy of Arts (RA). The early years of the professionalisation of art practice in England were led by president of the RA, Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose annual Discourses (Reynolds 1971) were lectures that sought to situate the activities of the academy within the traditions of the earlier European academies and the heritage of the classical world. These pronouncements were open to the public attended by students and published afterward (Hutchinson, 1968). Reynolds Discourses were an attempt to link what the painters at the RA were doing with classical precedents, thus, establishing a prestigious heritage for the work of the RA schools and for the paintings on show at the Summer Exhibitions. The work produced by Royal Academicians was essentially commercial with the farmyard genre paintings of artists like Henry Morland (Fernie-Clarke, 2004) offering opportunities for commercial gain for the print-sellers' who commissioned the paintings which then were sold in the form of engraved reproductions, but very little in the way of classical heritage. Then, as now, there was a network of interdependence between practitioners; fine artists; the print trade; the press; the audience and the wider social and political context. A network of people are active in creating a context in which work can be received and consumed. Contextual practitioners articulate the relationship of current work to work that has preceded it; to the context it is to be viewed in; and thus imbue it with 'worth'.

Contextual Practice and Critical and Contextual Studies in Art and Design in Higher Education

As indicated above, contemporary contextual practitioners can include the makers themselves, critics, curators, marketing and advertising organisations such as the arts, design and crafts councils and those hoping to 'profit' from exhibiting or selling work, this might include organisers of festivals such as Liverpool Biennial or the 'John Moores' competition. Other examples of the creation of a context for practical work to be produced and shown can now include social networks. A conference is contextual practice for ideas. Like festivals, competitions and councils, conferences

involve a grouping of practitioners with similar thematic, commercial, visual or ideological concerns.

Returning to how this relates to what art & design students do on undergraduate & postgraduate programmes; aspects of contextual practice, as defined above, can be included in one or more of the following areas of study; professional practice; business studies and contextual or critical studies modules. The last decade has seen an increase in the number of professional practice or employability related modules with little open or documented discussion of how these might relate to the contextual or critical studies content. There is no published comprehensive overview of Critical & Contextual Studies in Higher Education (HE) one possible explanation for this is that those who teach it are either practitioners, art historians or theorists who are aligned to their own discipline and perhaps do not see it as separate or worthy of study. Thus, very little academic work has been done on the history and evolution of Critical and Contextual Studies in Art and Design (HE). On their website the University of Brighton (2011) have published a precis of the contribution that the Coldstream Report made in term of the inclusion of 'complementary studies' or art history into diploma courses. There are also several published texts dealing with Critical Studies in Art and Design education at secondary level. David Thistlewood (1989) and Rod Taylor (1986) offer insights into the incorporation of critical perspectives on works by established artists into the GCSE curriculum. At HE level Critical and Contextual Studies (CS) needs not only to make students aware of previous practical and theoretical work in their chosen fields of interest but also to examine the complexities of contemporary contexts for practice as well as providing students with awarenesses of historically and theoretically relevant material.

Teaching practice across the sector is varied, in terms of modes of delivery and the weightings given to this aspect of the curriculum, but there are consistencies in terms of the overarching aims of CS. Of the institutions I been involved with over the last twenty years, including two specialist art colleges, two colleges delivering Higher Education in Further Education, a post-92 University and two former Institutes of HE which are now Universities, all had separate modules at each level of undergraduate study devoted to CS. All had separate 'CS' members of staff who aimed to encourage students to think about the contexts that are, or could be, appropriate for their work; develop communication skills; and promote evaluative and critical thinking. Perceptions of how well this was integrated with practice varies. Often the perceived 'separateness' of this area of study from the rest of the degree course is derived from there being (in all

cases) separate members of staff, trained in either fine art or art and design history, delivering the CS modules. There is no research that explains the reasons for the separation of theory and practice in the curriculum, but in essence it may be linked to the perceived separation between thinking and doing, between the artisanal and intellectual aspects of the arts, that stretches back to the renaissance and which is discussed at length in *The Changing Status of the Artist* (Barker, 1999) and which is alluded to in the brief reference above to the RA. Thus, through the curricula and the way it is divided up into discrete modules and delivered by 'theoreticians' HEIs are perpetuating the (spurious) distinction between the creativity of ideas expressed in written form and the 'creativity' that happens in the studio. Thus, there is a need to examine and, if necessary, challenge and unpick the artificial boundaries between theory and practice, between thinking and making. Contextual practice is an area of activity where theory, creativity and practice meet and the Blackpool Vistas project demonstrates this.

It is clear that outside of academic frameworks 'creatives' are working within a complex network of intersecting social, political and commercial contexts. The Blackpool Vistas project was an attempt to use contextual practice to connect the educational context with the immediate external social and artistic context and to create opportunities for staff and students to contextualise their work. What follows is a description of how 'contextual practice' was used in the Blackpool Vistas project (BV) which acts as a case study offering potential models of creative, collaborative and contextual practice.

Blackpool Vistas - The Educational and Local Context

Blackpool Vistas was a project that began in an educational context in order to acknowledge, understand and redefine the context in which staff and students were working and ended with an Arts Council Funded collaborative project.

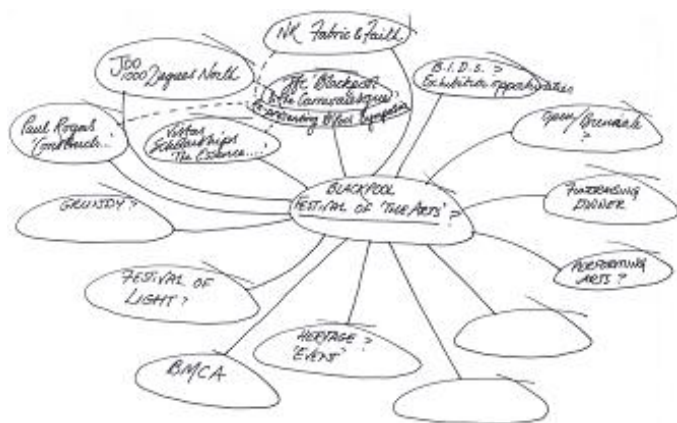
It was initiated in 2006 in order to provide an umbrella for focused 'research activity' for the staff and students who were involved in a new MA programme within a School of Art & Design delivering Higher Education across five undergraduate programmes. With over 300 students the School was exclusively HE and was within a large Further Education College (FE) and was thus part of a wider FE context. Typical of this area of the sector, the degree courses had grown out of HND programmes and, as part of the transition from HND to degree, from vocational to 'academic', the Critical Studies 'units' had been 'grafted on' to successful vocationally orientated studio-based courses. The Critical Studies curricula

and the resulting student work were continually and heavily scrutinised for evidence of 'academic rigor' and 'degreeness' by external examiners, the validating university, validation event panels and QAA subject reviews. An example of the contrived separateness of thinking and doing CS was delivered by a team of specially appointed theoreticians and (as with Reynolds' Discourses) the CS 'units' were used as testament to the high level of thinking within, and 'academic' content of, the programmes.

The new Masters degree was interdisciplinary with the idea that students from the five undergraduate programmes would progress onto the MA. It was the first to be developed in an Associate College of the validating university which actively encouraged the continuation of the existing 'brand' of HE in FE, practice-based, vocationally orientated activity to be carried through into the Masters programme. In order to ensure that students were working at the right level it was recommended that Critical Studies form a significant proportion of the curriculum and fifty percent of the curriculum was given over to CS. The challenge was therefore, not only to create the right context for MA level learning and teaching in a non-university town within an HE school in an FE institution, but also to meaningfully integrate CS with practice so that it was perceived by vocational students as being relevant and central to studio-based activity across a range of programmes. The curriculum design of the resulting interdisciplinary MA was based on the principle of research, analysis synthesis with the research and analysis for practice and theory outcomes being one in the same. All activity was linked to the student's initial proposal for their own research and practice and Critical Studies modules were the focus for group activity and the teaching of generic skills and knowledge which could then be applied to individual studio-based research projects.

In terms of the development of the overall context for the MA, inspiration came from the Cumbria Institute of the Arts (CIA) Landscape & Environment Symposium held at the Lanternhouse in Ulverston in March 2005. At that time CIA were an institution with aspirations to university status and the desire to develop a research culture. Indeed, throughout the North West art and design departments in HEIs had banded together to form a NW Universities 'research group' which organised the 'Creative Dates' event at Liverpool John Moores University in 2004. 'Creative Dates' was a forum for research active staff from a range of HE institutions to present their work. At both events representatives from the University of Salford presented the results of their work in the community 'Salford Reds' (Haywood, 2007) was an example of contextual practice that used both local resources, theory & practice. The focus of the majority of activity

The reception of the Blackpool papers at the Landscape and Environment symposium was positive, inspiring lots of interest and indicating to the panel that the Blackpool context was worthy of study. Simultaneous with the realisation that the Blackpool might offer potential in terms of arts-based research, there were other developments in town; the curator at The Grundy Gallery in Blackpool was keen to utilise and celebrate the Blackpool identity in his exhibition programme; a new creative director had been appointed at the illuminations department of the Borough Council; and the North west Development Agency's 'Creative Lancashire' had appointed a Blackpool-based representative charged with supporting the creative industries and organising networking events in the town. In addition to these developments the MA programme in Blackpool was also charged with the task of improving graduate retention and against a backdrop of discussions about the role of education and of the arts and creative industries in regeneration there was an increasing emphasis upon the new programme to be outward facing.



A number of local contacts are willing to collaborate, these include The Grundy Gallery; Blackpool Illuminations; local artists' and Creative Lancashire. Other Art and Design departments in North West HEIs are mobilising to support research in Art and Design.

This thinking led to an initial meeting between academic staff, Creative Lancashire and arts staff from local government including the Blackpool Illuminations Department. The idea of an arts event, or series of events, fitted with the thinking of local government and out of this came the idea for an 'arts festival' to involve local artists, students and College staff. In order to encourage students to stay in Blackpool after graduation as postgraduates and produce work related to their immediate context Blackpool Vistas Scholarships were offered in the form of a reduced MA fee. These scholarships were awarded to three photographers who exhibited and presented work as part of the 2007 Blackpool Vistas Arts Festival. The 'mind-map' below was used at the first meeting and demonstrates the inception of these ideas.

The underpinning theoretical context

A cohesive set of concepts were needed in order to set the context for visual enquiry and to present a direction for the visual work. These came from the theorist Louis Althusser (Hall, 1985) and authors Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (1986) who discuss the ways in which images can present an ideological transformation of a social formation. In particular Stallybrass and White were interested in representations of transgression and this had been discussed in one of the Blackpool papers presented at the Landscape and Environment symposium. It looked at televised representations of Blackpool and their relationship to long established narrative traditions that showed the urbane environment as dangerous to morals. Rather than showing the 'realities' of contemporary Blackpool TV drama series such as *Funland* (2005) and *Blackpool* (2004) represented the town according to an established set of conventions that showed the town as having a corrupting influence. This could be interpreted as an ideological transformation, an idea explored in an academic paper which grew out of the initial Blackpool Vistas paper presented in 2005 and which was developed and published as a paper titled *Contemporary Carnival: Blackpool and the symbolic suspension of real-life* (Ferne-Clarke 2007). Under-

pinning the Blackpool Vistas project was the impetus to produce positive images of the town, images that challenged the established mode of showing the town to be dissolute, corrupting and negative. The visual work was to be a direct effort to improve perceptions of the town through the production of imagery that purposely defied existing stereotypical representations of Blackpool.

The Blackpool Vistas Arts Festivals 2007/ 2008

Planning began in 2006 and the first symposium and associated exhibitions took place at Blackpool and the Fylde College on the 14th February 2007 with exhibitions in the College and at several venues externally including a nightclub, a coffee bar and the studios of a local artists' collective. In addition to students' exhibits there were also associated exhibitions of work by local artists. In order to further contextualise the work and events information was published on the associated Blackpool Vistas website which was active from 2006-2011 from which there were active links to other arts organisations and participating artists' personal websites. The following are examples of pages taken from the Blackpool vistas website:

Undergraduates also contributed with a graphics project titled 'Conversations' which involved Level 4 students working on Blackpool inspired typographic work that was published as a book of postcards that was on sale at the events. The speakers at the symposium included colleagues from the Manchester Metropolitan and Salford Universities as well as local artists, members of staff, students and an interested publisher. Papers were grouped according to the conference theme which was 'Representation, transformation, regeneration' acknowledging the agendas of agencies promoting the 'Creative Industries' in the region. It was attended by academics, members of the public and practitioners as well as HE students at all levels of study and a fee was charged in order to offset the cost of catering.

Following the positive reception of the 2007 events a further Blackpool Vistas Arts Festival took place in 2008 following a similar format the details published to advertise and accompany the event were again published on the website and are included below in order to give an indication of the themes chosen to emphasise the unique Blackpool context, artistic production in the town and the nature and scale of involvement:

Art, Bawdiness and the Carnavalesque

A symposium at the School of Art & Design, Palatine Road, Blackpool-Tuesday 1st April 2008

Mid-day Introduction

Session 1: Historical Perspectives on Blackpool, Art, Bawdiness and the Carnavalesque

12.15pm 'Blackpool and Carnival' Professor John Walton- Institute of Northern Studies, Leeds Metropolitan University.

1pm 'Blackpool: An Imagined Reconstruction' Dr Jill Fernie-Clarke- The School of Art & Design, Blackpool.

1.45pm 'Admission All Classes' Pat Hansell & Caroline Hall -Blackpool Council

Session 2: Positive Representations of Blackpool

2.30pm "Blackpool, The People's Playground - A Celebration of A Seaside Town for the 21st Century"

Guy Woodlander -Publisher Cities500

3pm Gwen Jones & Yannick Dixon 'Blackpool: An Unimagined Space'- Photographers

Session 3: Creative Inquiry - Blackpool based artists

3.30pm Henry Iddon- 'Spots of Time' (update) Photographer

4pm 'Conversations' A moving image project inspired by Blackpool

4.15pm Visualising 'Bawdiness and Drag' a collaborative project- Graphics and photography

Session 4: Fine Art responses to Blackpool, Bawdiness and the Carnavalesque

4.30-6pm Visits to Exhibitions

6.30pm Bawdy feast (Hotpot supper) The Bar, The Comrades Club.

Exhibitor NICK KOWALSKI & ORB ARTS

Title: High days and low days/ Carnavalesque

Location: The Comrades Club, Adelaide Street, Blackpool.

The exhibition will take place for one week at the Comrades of the Great War Club, Adelaide Street, Blackpool.

The exhibition High days and low days explores the duality of carnival, its light-hearted, celebratory aspects, and contrasts these, with the other, often darker, unseen sides. Various methodologies and processes are used to investigate the many facets of "Identity". Subject matter used to examine this dichotomy includes the human figure at play, Symbolic landmarks, blackpolls folk art heritage, buildings old and new, the ongoing construction of the new sea wall, and the aftermath / detritus of carnival.

As part of our unique relationship with the club, six members of the comrades will contribute to the exhibition / Artwork by "penning thoughts, pictures or diagrams" based on the notion of "carnival."

Visitors to the exhibition will also be offered the opportunity of contributing to this exhibition – helping to re-present and re-define the context of the art works presented.

Orb artists studios is a group of six trained local artists whose works are based on and are committed to representing Blackpool. This artist collective has been based in the centre of Blackpool in the comrades of the Great War club since 1998.

Orb art is a non commercial artist group and as part of it's manifesto often undertakes projects within the local community. Orb art views the Blackpool Vistas event as an opportunity to showcase its continuing involvement in representing and the re-generation of Blackpool.

Exhibitor ANN CARRAGHER

Title: Archaeo.repro

Location: Display Case in the Foyer, The School of Art & Design, Palatine Road, Blackpool FY1 4DW

This small body of work visually investigates aspects of architectural theory with various issues relative to Blackpool's past, present & future. As Architecture finds resolution in form and material, it offers spatial experience, each one open to interpretation and use, disclosing various social, aesthetic, political & economic conditions as well as diverse uses, desires & experiences.

Exhibitor: PAUL ROGERS

Title: Touching the Horizon

Location: Blackpool City Learning Centre, Bathurst Avenue, Blackpool. FY3 7RW

In the photography Rogers is attempting to explore two major themes, the interface between technology and the sublime and the visual metaphor of the horizon. The horizon has been a long-standing item

of investigation, and the interest in, and curiosity for it as a visual element continues. The circumstance of the development and building of the new promenade also presents an opportunity for an exploration and investigation of the idea of the 'technological sublime'. The images attempt to replicate what Nye describes in his book *The American Technological Sublime* as 'a fascination with the multiple points of view created by a massive technological project'.

The additional value of the photography is that of wanting to share with the community the creative visual possibilities of photographing this kind of subject. How the construction project itself, not necessarily the end result, can be seen as having an inherent beauty, reinforcing ideas about the technological sublime and developing a community pride and ownership of the scheme.

Exhibitor BLOTT ARTIST STUDIOS

Title: Effervescence

Location: Blott Artist Studios, King Street, Blackpool. In order to lengthen the holiday season, Blackpool's dignitaries decided to emulate the French city of Nice and stage a carnival in the town. The first of the carnivals was a huge success. However, during the 1924 Carnival the 'rowdy element' crept in and it was decided to abandon any similar future events. Blott Artist Studios endeavour to bring both the 'Carnavalesque' atmosphere and the rowdy element of the two Carnivals to life using original artwork created especially for the exhibition in the form of paintings; photography and drawings; previously unseen photos of the Carnival, taken by local photographer Christopher Annand and excerpts of writing about the Carnivals by J.K. Walton Professor of Social History, Institute of Northern Studies, Leeds Metropolitan University.

In 2007 and 2008 the Blackpool Vistas project involved students at all levels of study in the School, either as exhibitors, presenters or delegates.

Blackpool Vistas 09

In 2009 the theoretical context of the project remained the same, i.e. the transformation of thinking about Blackpool through work that attempted to change perceptions and challenge stereotypical representations of Blackpool. The format changed as the result of the departure of key staff and the subsequent suspension of recruitment to the MA. The continued enquiry into the Blackpool context (described in the abstract above) was funded by Arts Council England and was focused specifically upon the 'Comrades Club' which had been included in the previous events as an exhibition space. In 2009 it was the subject of research and related art work which took the form of an installation. The Club also hosted the symposium and associated

exhibitions of work. Details of the 2009 event were as follows:

Blackpool Vistas '09 Arts Festival 30th March-4th April
'Art: Changing Perceptions of Place'

The third annual Blackpool Vistas Symposium will take place on 1st April '09, 2-7 pm at the Comrades Club, Adelaide Street, Blackpool.

Programme

2-3pm Artists & delegates- registration and informal welcome in the bar

3pm Introduction and overview of Blackpool Vistas
Imaginative Reconstruction:

From Theory to Practice Dr Jill Fernie-Clarke

3.20pm The Guernika-ness of Guernica Josie Bland, University of Teesside

3.40pm Taking a Line for a Walk David Stokes, University of Liverpool & gmf

4.10pm Metamorphosis and Place Dr Mark Haywood, University of Cumbria

4.40pm Blackpool Arts Regeneration Project Artist in Residence Kate Eggelston-Wirtz

5pm Short Break

5.10pm Visualising Blackpool as a Body of Energy - Colin Binns

5.30pm Passage Suzanne Pinder

5.45pm Films by contemporary local film makers provided by Blackpool Council supporters of the event

6.30pm Plenary & discussion Art: Changing Perceptions of Place?

7-9pm Private View: Portal Site Specific Work by Nicholas Kowalski and Passage Orb Art

7.15pm Hotpot supper

Exhibitions

At The Comrades Club:

Portal Nicholas Kowalski an installation particular to the Comrades Club – using its unique and multi layered history, architectural fixtures, physical landscapes, and existing/ambient lighting.

Passage by members of Orb Art, Orb Artist's Studios, First Floor.

At the New Blackpool Enterprise Centre:

Visualising Blackpool as a Body of Energy by Colin Binns

And New Photographic Work by Paul Rogers

Conclusion

From 2006-2009 the Blackpool Vistas project offered HE staff, students and local artists a focal point and a context in which to exhibit, talk about and promote their work and the project became an integral part of the MA programme. It harnessed the desire of local agencies and artists to act together in order to create a context for work produced in the town, and as

demonstrated above, as well as student involvement there were contributions by the wider academic, artistic and local communities. It facilitated interdisciplinary contact between staff, students and local practitioners as well as contact between undergraduate and postgraduate students. It was organised and facilitated by 'contextual practitioners' who were the staff delivering Critical and Contextual Studies across the School and who, because of their continued working across disciplines, and levels, and their involvement in the development of an interdisciplinary MA, were able to act with relative impartiality to involve multiple partners; to collaborate in order to do 'research'; provide a generic theoretical context for the MA programme and for the visual work of staff and students.

This perhaps demonstrates that those working successfully to deliver Critical and Contextual Studies across art & design disciplines are perhaps uniquely placed to initiate the creation of a context for the work produced by students; to bring together practitioners and theorists from different disciplines and to interface with external partners. This also points towards the possibility that the CS curriculum could move away from the emphasis on history and theory (the heritage of Reynolds and Coldstream) and the heavy emphasis on the individualism of the practitioner, to incorporate the study of and participation in projects such as this, involving collaborative work, relevant theoretical perspectives, practice and awareness of the interconnectedness and complexity of contemporary art and design contexts.

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Collaborative Manifestos and their implementation within the art school (Three Edited Case Studies)

Elle Reynolds

Introduction

The competitive jobs market and graduate need to maximise chances of employment are key drivers to the ongoing requirement to embed personal and professional development and collaborative practices within the fine art curriculum. Post-industrial cities, in particular, now realise that they depend for their wealth almost entirely on the knowledge and the “soft” skills that a highly educated workforce brings, Florida (2004). This ‘realisation’ has resulted in marked changes to fine art pedagogy and to the locations where learning and teaching in fine art takes place. There has been in many art and design institutions an emphasis on teaching within the Art College using the model of the Artist’s Studio. That is as a single location in which to create, complete and exhibit work; occasionally this may also see the student attending a specialist workshop, i.e. photography, or print. The altering vocabularies of the medium of art, has also required the expanded identity of the artist. Given these changing perimeters what can the art school offer?

Of course learning and teaching can take place in other locations - libraries, virtual spaces and social spaces and recent literature have started to survey these other locations. From this research questions have emerged; how can we further develop the architecture of creative learning spaces to promote personal and professional development, collaboration and communities of practice? What has been the influence of collaborative strategies on teaching and learning? Does this result in new paradigms for Fine Art education? Does the architecture of learning support student diversity and encourage critical reflection? The paper presented today addresses some of these emerging questions within the context of architectural space.

Architecture for learning

There is increasing research and literature on the importance of space to facilitate learning, the designed space for effective learning, is one often-cited report that emphasises the need for collaboration and student centred learning (JISC 2009). Yet the report tends to focus on technology supported learning spaces; I.T. and virtual learning environments. Temple (2008) argues that there should be deeper theoretical research into the importance of space in the design of the University campus. Around the world, many – perhaps most – important universities are embedded in the urban fabric of major cities. In both developed

and developing countries, universities are now usually seen as major sources of high-quality human capital, and as such, important contributors to the economic and social vitality of city (and so to national) life, as several recent studies have indicated (Goddard, 1999; ODPM, 2006).

There is, however, little evidence that decisions on the design of university campuses are usually informed by an understanding of the relationships between space and the teaching and learning that will go on within it (Barnett and Temple, 2006: 11). As Temple (2007) and Smith, Boys and Melhuish (2010) advise - there should be further investigation into the development of broader flexible learning spaces. Within the specific context of art and design there is a gap in the research that articulates the context of the educational environment itself as a learning space; how the architecture and other physical elements of the city University campus contribute to learning and how as Maves and Sharpless (2005) suggest ‘space becomes place’. In the context of the new forms of participation art – social, political and the rise of the artist/ collaborator/ collective, this is an area in need of greater theoretical understanding.

More recently there has been a shift in art and design teaching to one that encourages the student to establish networks and partnerships in relation to a developing professional practice. A space that encourages collaborations that capitalises on communities of practices and that is structured to support student centred learning. Some might say, within and outside of the art educational institution - although I increasingly find myself adopting the position of the Architectural Associations Director of History and Theories, Mark Cousins (AA 2011), ‘that there is no out there’. Cousins frequently quotes Freud – ‘we only have each of our realities’, reality therefore is not out there.

This paper will introduce a series of collaborative proposals, completed projects and possibilities within the context of developing a Fine Art practice beyond the acquisition of studio skills. I will today present three edited case studies as speculative proposals/reflections in the form of manifestos. I aim to articulate some issues that are relevant within the art school at present and offer a brief survey around the architecture of collaboration; that is the architecture: physical boundaries, perimeters and structures that have the capacity to both restrict and encourage collaborations.

Research Aim:

To explore the architecture of learning spaces and collaboration

To establish what works

To understand the way students experience, what Schön (1991) refers to as reflection in action

Methodology:

Participant interviews

Observations

Activity space mapping

Photo Narrative

Keywords: Collaboration, Experienced Based Learning, Fine Art Practice, Learning Spaces, Personal & Professional Development, Reflective Practitioner, Situated Practice

Case Study 01: The Concourse Gallery 1991-2011

The Concourse Gallery is a private/public space located within the art college; essentially a corridor linking the main entrance to the ground floor of the building. It has adopted the form of a white cube space, which in many ways is relevant to its origins as a modernist industrial building, a former bomb-making factory constructed in the 1930s. Entrances and exits add to the dramaturgy / performative scene – space shifts your social positioning, from being audience - to voyeur if for example a critique is taking place. The space in many ways emphasises its own condition, highlighting social elements and physical characteristics. It is both a public space, (visitors enter through here) and private space. O' Doherty (2000) states many galleries are a frame for people to behave in a particular way. Yet here the architecture also has a hand in dictating behaviour - in collaboration with the artist. Here the emerging artist is encouraged to consider an area of practice beyond the studio to create within the gallery site-specific work. It requires the artist to activate the space into a fusion of art and life.

The Manifesto, Caws (2001) – a public statement that sets forth the tenets of a forthcoming/existing/potential movement or ism or that plays on the idea of one – a crucial and forceful vehicle for artists to express ideas about their direction of aesthetics and society.

Manifesto

Encouraging exchanges between similar regional/national institutions

A place for peer to peer critique (creates an opportunity to meet and debate with a wider peer group), this in turn offers different (revised) viewpoints

Promoting communities of practice and disciplinary

trespassing (creates new connections between different art practices - mediums of sculpture, drawing, print-making; also photography, moving image and sound)

Investigating the gallery as studio space and testing ground for ideas

laboratorium (Hans-Ulrich Obrist 2005)

Offers the possibilities of future collaborative projects/exchanges

Create a sense of community – where all students learn, engage, and feel validated (Temple 2007)

The Concourse exhibitions provides opportunities for the emerging artist to examine practice without being assessed, with this pressure removed there is additional opportunity for the relationship between students to be further developed. This is the exhibition with added pedagogy, but assessment extracted:

Emerging artists are encouraged to use the Concourse Gallery as an active productive space, not to just as a place to passively display or view art, although they do learn some of the protocols of the gallery. Boud (1985) 'They will have practiced some of the skills required of them in the setting of the College or University'. In many ways it is not the art work that is curated but relationships between the artists; and thus confidence - for the next collaborative occasion. Even the visible / invisible student has their moment, there are no spaces to hide and confidence is developed.

Conclusions

Participation in the Concourse gallery is often a catalyst for networking. The experience instigates conversations, enables joining conversations and there is no need for etiquette. Comment and opinion can be given freely. Making connections you did not know existed (interconnectedness of things) through personal & shared reflections. This rich source of feedback encourages recording of ideas, reflection and future collaborations.

At the essence is collaborative investigation of space and artist (often disparate techniques and practices) as maker of meaning within that space. A dialogue is encouraged which allows many students to embark on a process to generate ideas for studio-based work, linking theory and practice.

In examining learning and teaching within the context the art college and in regard to the Concourse collaboration it is useful to use Mezirow's (1978, 1981) framework of what he calls 'perspective transforma-

tions' and Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984) to describe the aims, a process of becoming critically aware of how we operate. And how our reflection orientates us for further thought and action, Boud et al (1985).

sharing space
making space
collaborative space
viewing space
where things (happiness) happen

Case Study 02: Capturing and encouraging learning through collaboration outside the Institution

AIR Archway Investigations & Responses:

AIR is a commissioning body that develops artwork through acknowledgment and transformation of a site, whilst incorporating the site into the work and acknowledging the rise of new forms of participation outside the gallery. This sees the emerging artist engaged in site working within the built environment. AIR is located within the university itself located in the city and utilises the city itself as an - ideopolis (Temple 2007).

Philosophy:

Collaborative working – manage creativity with other people – it is not a lone activity, it is a communal activity.

Exploring interconnectedness.

Challenging perceptions of where work can be made. A Situated Practice; examining how learning is socially situated, how 'things' can be central or 'peripheral' depending on where you are.

Manifesto

Responding to the site of Archway

A study of urban life through investigation and the production of ideas/artworks

Consideration given to methodologies of documentation

Exploring places for art to occur

Superfixing: a bespoke urban improvement (with/without permission)

Collaborations with local agencies and fine art

The emerging artist as creator, inventor, activist, curator, installer and manager = superfixer

This is learning in the public and 3rd sector. In many ways offering more profound learning, students are often thrown in and seen as the expert in that they are viewed as possessing currency, have fresh ideas from which to generate creative solutions). There are also niche areas (and therefore income streams) that were not available 10 years ago; for example environmental projects and the reparation of urban areas.

Case Study 03: MOSS (artist educator collaborator)

Presented as a model of good practice of how to work between institutions and collaborate with outside partners. MOSS is an international collaboration between four fine art institutions; Universitatea de Arta si Design - Cluj Napoca; Universidad del Pais Vasco/ Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea - Bilbao; Estonian Academy of Arts - Tallinn; CSM, University of the Arts - London. Included within these collaborations is are propositions to bid for European Research Council FP7 funding to examine the impact on curriculum development and the resulting critical exchanges through different approaches to learning and teaching; cultural similarities and differences.

Manifesto

Become a MOSS artist/educator/collaborator, (encouraging exchanges with a European dimension)

Dialogue and debate to inform postgraduate curriculum developments

Participation by tutors in MOSS group exhibitions

Undergraduate student and academic tutor (cultural) exchanges undertaken across institutions each year

Conclusions and recommendations

The three case studies (cs) presented, albeit briefly, have at their essence the notion of a community of collaborators. Collaboration of the exhibition, built by many, as the art objects enter the world within a specific architectural discourse this offers a particular scenographic process, which brings individuals together. The experience of working in the Concourse Gallery (cs 01), within the ideopolis (cs02) and alongside international artist educators (cs03) MOSS offer possibilities for other forms of critical reflection and development of practice within an expanded field of architectural spaces. All three examples offer opportunities for community-building at the university, which is believed to support students' learning in various subtle ways, (Temple 2007).

The three examples I have shown today incorporate supportive structures to encourage student centered learning through virtual, conceptual, physical, social, personal space and in the speculation of space constructed around social conditions Lefebvre (1974) and power Foucault (1975). These are territories that require further elaboration.

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Francesca Baseby

Mine? I thought it was the most gorgeous object I had ever had any part in, but it was ours, not mine.¹
(Harold Cohen)

'Collaboration' and 'inter-disciplinary' are buzz words in the contemporary world of visual arts, but they are not unique to the twenty-first century. Since the 1940s Dovecot Studios has been weaving tapestries in collaboration with artist designers such as Graham Sutherland, Frank Stella, David Hockney and Claire Barclay. The types of relationships such artists have had with the studio have varied. Some have collaborated with them repeatedly, some only once. Some worked very closely alongside the weavers and were involved in the process of transforming the image into a tapestry, others had little contact after the design was submitted.

Douglas Grierson, a Master Weaver at Dovecot for fifty years, reflected the thoughts of weavers past and present when he wrote:

The success of a tapestry is often in the artist's hands. To be anxious or over precious is passed on to the weaver, then no one is the winner. Others are flamboyant and confident and willing to step into the weavers' world and taste the delights of a new medium... The success of a tapestry is when the weaver and artist are completely relaxed in each other's company.² The term 'collaboration' in this paper refers to a process in which the interchange of ideas takes place on a personal level, often face to face. As proven in Grierson's statement above, working together requires the coming together of different personalities and often a project's success is defined by their compatibility as colleagues.

Harold Cohen rose to prominence as a painter in the 1950s and early 1960s. His abstract paintings of that period are boldly coloured, with detailed surface patterns and a tension between colour and line. His contribution to abstract British art is exemplified by his inclusion in the 1961 'Situation' exhibition in London and the 1966 Venice Biennale. In the late 1960s Cohen's art went in a different direction after a move to the United States. Teaching at the University of San Diego, California Cohen became increasingly interested in the potential of computer programmes as tools

to create unique artworks, created by the programme's own creative intelligence. This programme was called AARON.

Dovecot Studios collaborated with Cohen during two distinct and stylistically different periods of his career. The first was during 1966-8 when Cohen was still producing paintings using paint and collage techniques. The second occurred in the early 1980s when his use of computer programming was maturing and becoming more complex. This paper will use a selection of the six tapestries produced by Dovecot to Cohen's designs as a starting point to examine how and why the relationship was so fruitful, considering the apparent dichotomy between the materials and methodologies employed by both parties. It will also examine how the collaborative relationship was able to continue despite Cohen's changing approaches to art. Cohen's essay for a 1980 exhibition catalogue of Dovecot works provides a complimentary source of evidence.

Having examined the nature of the collaboration, this paper will then discuss the ideological challenges which present themselves when we consider the use of a digital image as a design for a so-called 'handicraft'.

Collaboration was, and still is, a common feature of Dovecot Studios and its early relationship with Cohen will be placed into the context of Dovecot's other activities during the 1960s. The collaborative working methods of Dovecot Studios has not been studied in depth since 1980 and this paper attempts to address this void using a rich example. The scale and nature of the tapestries woven reveal much about the context in which they were created.

The key to a successful collaboration

Cohen won the commission to design a tapestry for British Petroleum in 1964. During the period 1950 to 1970, approximately fifty percent of the tapestries woven at Dovecot were commissions. Included in these were a number of commissions for new buildings. Such architectural works can be linked to the increase in building activity in the 1950s and 1960s, part of the economic recovery in the post-war period. The BP Tapestry was woven for Brittanica House, the company's newly built headquarters in London. The

1 Cohen, Harold 1980. 'An Artist's View of Dovecot Studios', Master Weavers: Tapestry from the Dovecot Studios 1912-1980 (Edinburgh, Canongate): 15.

2 Grierson, Douglas 1996. 'A Weaver's View: 35 Years of Desert Island Discs', Edinburgh Sessions: A Tapestry Seminar (unpublished transcript, Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art).

tapestry, designed for the staff coffee room, was one of a number of artistic commissions including a large mural by Edward Bawden in the staff restaurant. Every interior aspect of the scheme was carefully considered, from furniture to lighting design.

Dovecot's Artistic Director, Archie Brennan, set the tone of the project the first time Cohen met them. Brennan immediately pointed out that the large area of flat colour which Cohen had put in his design would not be stimulating for the weaver's to weave; he was not disparaging Cohen's style but asserting from the start that the process of design was to be one of teamwork.³ The personal nature of two people working together can often be sidelined – it seems taboo to suggest that two personalities might not be able to get on or work together. But the key to this relationship was absolutely due to the meeting of two minds. Brennan appreciated the respect and interest which Cohen exhibited towards the weavers, and they in turn respected him for it.⁴

The working relationship between Cohen and Dovecot is surprising when one considers their working methods. Cohen in 1964 was an 'improvising' artist; he did not begin painting with a finished product in mind.⁵ Instead he used his intuition to build up a series of colours and forms, each mark evolving from the one made before. This method is at odds with tapestry design. Once begun, a tapestry cannot be undone. I wonder how many people realise that they aren't working on the textile; they are building it as they go along.⁶

Because of this, a tapestry's design has to be carefully planned before weaving can begin, a working method diametrically opposed to how Cohen painted his pictures. Cohen had already created designs for printed textiles, many of which are in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, but from the outset he realised that designing for tapestry required a different thought process. How did they overcome this obstacle? Through the sharing of common ideas and design principles. Tapestry weaving is a process of construction and Cohen had always been fascinated by how things were made. His own paintings were often made using three dimensional collage or layers of paint, one on top of the other. This interest in structure in the creative process was an influence on his later computer programming.

Cohen was keen to experiment with the weavers and work with them as creative partners. On each trip he made to Edinburgh he brought new ideas and

designs to show to the weaving team; a number of weaving samples were made, trying different weaving techniques.⁷ The finished tapestry for BP was to be twenty-six feet in length and eight foot nine inches in height. Because of the large size of the tapestry and the abstract nature of the design, the weavers were able to adopt Cohen's improvising method and continued to alter the design as they wove; the tapestry was woven on its side from left to right so the left end of the design was the first part to be decided upon, although they had agreed on a provisional overall design for the piece. For Cohen, this slow process of weaving a large scale work induced anxiety:

Would our overview of the colours have changed gradually as we proceeded? Could anyone possibly remember what the whole thing was like to the extent of being able to maintain consistency? ... I should have had more faith in Archie and his able colleagues.⁸ Working on a large scale was not new to Cohen. Roger Coleman's catalogue essay for the 'Situation' exhibition noted that all paintings had to be at least thirty square feet in size.⁹ The intention of the exhibition organisers, Roger Coleman and Lawrence Alloway, and the exhibiting artists was to challenge London galleries' reluctance to accept monumental sized works by illustrating how they were able to occupy even moderate sized rooms. They were content for the viewer to be enveloped by the painting: Although the big pix at the RBA carry handsomely in the large rooms... the large scale does not require a larger floor space in front of it, a vista to terminate. On the contrary, with flat pictorial space, mid-century large paintings work well close to, in terms of intimacy and involvement.¹⁰

Once the tapestry for BP was completed, Cohen and Brennan continued working together and created two further tapestries: *Untitled* (1966) in the Edinburgh City Council Collection and *Overall* (1967) in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The subsequent tapestries were speculative and more experimental in nature; the lack of a pre-existing patron for these show that Cohen's interest in the studio was not driven purely by financial motives. He was genuinely interested in experimenting with, and challenging, the weavers.

Cohen's collaboration with the studios in the 1960s happened at a time when Dovecot's activities with artist-designers were on the increase. In the immediate post-war period, the Directors of Dovecot approached

⁷ Brennan 1966: 1.

⁸ Cohen 1980: 15.

⁹ Coleman, Roger 1960. Text for 'Situation' Catalogue, reproduced in Mellor, David 1993. *The Sixties Art Scene in London* (London, Phaidon): 90.

¹⁰ Alloway, Lawrence 1960. 'Size Wise', *Art News and Review*, reproduced in Mellor, David 1993. *The Sixties Art Scene in London* (London, Phaidon): 91.

³ Cohen 1980: 13.

⁴ Brennan, Archie 1966. 'Tapestry Tale', BP Shield, 10: 1.

⁵ Cohen, Becky 1976. *Harold Cohen Paintings 1965-1975* (Edinburgh, Fruitmarket Gallery).

⁶ Cohen 1980: 14.

a number of famous British artists to design for tapestry as a way of increasing the reputation of the studio, including Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and John Piper. In the 1960s this was accelerated under the artistic direction of weaver Archie Brennan.

Brennan's skill at communicating with artists, as evidenced by his relationship with Cohen, led to a renewed interest from artists to design for tapestry. The 1960s saw Dovecot work with Hans Tisdall, Joyce Conwy Evans, Jerzy Faczynski, Elizabeth Blackadder, Eduardo Paolozzi and David Hockney, to name a few.

Cohen has been described as an artist who is looking and moving forward, never content to stay in one place creatively.¹¹ By his own admission, his experience of designing for tapestry in the mid-1960s was one of the many influences on his involvement in computer programming and long-term abandonment of painting.¹²

I started using the computer to provide explicitly structured formats for certain colour games, and came to recognise only gradually, and perhaps even a little unwillingly, that I found the structural aspects altogether more absorbing than the colour itself.¹³

Structure is the key word here. AARON's early images were black and white line drawings – although Cohen was interested in colour the technology for it was not yet available.¹⁴ The lines of the finished pictures are stepped, as they are in a tapestry.

In the early 1980s, most likely prompted by the renewed contact with Cohen after he wrote the 1980 essay for Dovecot, Fiona Mathison asked Cohen for permission to weave a new tapestry.¹⁵ White Computer was the first of three tapestries to be woven from Cohen's computer drawings. Despite the change in artistic direction which Cohen had undertaken since the 1960s, the weavers found that they were still able to collaborate with him in a valuable way. The black lines of the design were, as expected, suited to tapestry weaving due to their stepped nature; perfect curves are not possible in tapestry due to the weft being woven horizontally through upright, parallel warps. In order to stop the tapestry becoming a flat expanse of white, two shades were used and cotton was mixed with wool in order to give the tapestry a subtle reflective quality.

Unlike the work undertaken on the first trio of tapestries, Cohen was only able to visit the studios once in the 1980s, due to his relocation to the United States. The collaboration in this instance, therefore, had less of a face-to-face element. The nature of the designs was also different; there were fewer opportunities for the interchanging of ideas and the tapestries were designed from pre-existing works produced by AARON. Does this alter how we view the relationship between Cohen and Dovecot in the 1980s,

as compared to the 1960s? Can a collaboration be as effective when there is physical distance between the artist and organisation involved? The second group of tapestries are less instant in their impact than the first. Their colours and patterns do not jump out of the yarn; the 1960s designs are truly dynamic in their intentions. The later tapestries reflect the more quietly thoughtful way in which the designs were produced. As AARON is not a human being, the weavers could not interact with it directly. Looking at these tapestries, they encourage the viewer to contemplate the lines woven into the surface, in the same way that AARON has considered each line before moving on to the next.

Technology and 'handicraft'

It is important at this point to give a brief description of how AARON operates as this is now Cohen's primary form of artistic production. AARON is able to produce an infinite number of unique images, storing them in its memory to ensure they are not repeated. It is not directed by Cohen. Instead, he has given it three abilities which it uses to create pictures: to differentiate between figure and ground, to differentiate between open forms and closed forms and to differentiate between 'insideness' and 'outsideness'.¹⁶ The way AARON operates when creating an image is similar to Cohen's painting practice in the 1950s and 1960s. As it draws, it is constantly evaluating what it has done before making the next mark.

Norbert Wiener's writings on cybernetics from the 1950s draw the closest parallel between the actions of the human mind and those of a computer.¹⁷ Like Cohen, he was interested in the ability of computer programmes to mimic the human brain, particularly in the area of feedback. For example, when a weaver is batting down a piece of weft with his bobbin, it requires more concentration the first time he hits; this is because after this first hit, his mind receives feedback about this motion which allows him to continue more accurately with less attention. Feedback is crucial to the way AARON is constructed.

11 Conversation with Douglas Grierson at Dovecot, 07/12/10.

12 Cohen 1980: 15.

13 Cohen, B 1976.

14 Email correspondence, Harold Cohen to Francesca Baseby, 26 August 2010.

15 Correspondence is in the Edinburgh Tapestry Company archives at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute. Because of the non-descriptive titles of the tapestries woven at this time and small amount of paperwork it is difficult to find precise dates for each tapestry.

16 Cohen 1976: 9.

17 Wiener, Norbert 1950. 'What is Cybernetics?', excerpted in *The Craft Reader* (Oxford, Berg Publishers): 304.

Although these theories allow us to consider a link between computer programming and art and craft created by human hands, the use of a digital image as a tapestry design has obvious restrictions. Already mentioned is the lack of direct communication between weaver and computer. Before the tapestries had been begun, some were already voicing their concern. When Douglas Hall, Keeper of Art at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 1980, was told of the project, he told Mathison that he was cautious about computer elements being incorporated into tapestry design.¹⁸

In the finished works, the technical similarities between the computer drawings and the structure of weaving were combined together to create thought-provoking tapestries. It is clear that the designs have come from a computer programme, and they are strengthened by not attempting to disguise this.

The Cohen/Dovecot tapestries have provided a rich source of material from which to begin discussing broader themes relating to Dovecot's past, present and future. Collaborations are not only influenced by the people involved in them but are representative of the socio-economic climate they were produced. Artistic pairings have become an integral part of the workshop's practice and this, in part, is Archie Brennan and Harold Cohen's legacy. Cohen has continued to move forward with his work. AARON has progressed since its early inception, becoming more sophisticated in its output and in 2010 Cohen began painting again. His most recent collection of work used AARON's output as a form of underpainting on the canvas, from which Cohen built up a finished painting by hand.¹⁹

¹⁸ Edinburgh Tapestry Archives, Mount Stuart.

¹⁹ Exhibition: 'Harold Cohen New Paintings', 8 April to 7 May 2011, Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London.

Rachel Beth Egenhoefer

Ideas presented in this paper are preliminary parts of a larger body of research on the resurgence of the Arts & Crafts Movement in light of Sustainability.

I am interested in the ways in which ideas from the Arts & Crafts Movement are re-surfacing in light of Sustainable practices with particular focus on community and collaboration. The international design movement was a reaction against the mass produced in favor of skilled craftsmanship. Artists, designers, and writers of the movement used simple forms, references to nature, high quality materials, and fine craftsmanship as a way to reject a culture of mass produced goods created in poor labor conditions with sacrificed materials. Ideas from the Arts & Crafts Movement were reflected in many forms from art and architecture to domestic design and decorative arts, written texts and political movements. This description of the cultural climate from approximately 1880-1930 could just as easily be said about the present times. In light of the increased awareness on the climate crisis, there has been a massive resurgence of artists, designers, chefs, writers, and community members who are opting for organic and locally made products, artisan crafted goods instead of the mass-produced, and an abundance of logos are stamped on products for being fair trade, rain-forest certified, sweat-shop free, organic, local, green, and others. Given this resurgence, how can we use collaboration in craft as a social medium, a necessity to building, and as a larger system of creating community?

The Arts & Crafts movement advocated truth to materials and traditional craftsmanship using simple forms. As a rejection of both the mass produced and the overly decorated, many of the objects created during this period featured plants, flowers, and animals from nature. The philosophy of the makers included advocacy for social reform to create economic equality, preservation of resources, and the creation of cooperative work environments. In the late 19th century these ideas could be found across a wide variety of mediums including architecture, textiles, stained glass, jewelry, furniture, decorative arts, book making, and many others.

Today we see many of these ideas returning in goods and services. Popular designers feature leaves, birds, grass, deer, flowers, and other “natural” designs on their wares. Some share the same qualities of craftsmanship from the Arts and Crafts Movement, while other simply mimic this ideal. With the increased

awareness of global warming and the climate crisis consumers are becoming more conscious of their purchases and it's impact on the environment. As a result manufactures are offering more “green” choices. This market trend has then trickled into the visual design of objects and projects. While we see these things being marketed on mass scales, the same imagery and ideas can be found on hand crafted artisan goods.

However the comparison is not just related to the look and the desire of wanting to return to nature, but also can be seen in the desire to obtain handmade, artisan goods from the maker themselves. Whereas makers in the Arts & Crafts movement rejected mass produced factory goods in response to the Industrial Revolution, today's makers are rejecting mass produced factory goods in response to Sustainability. Choosing to buy locally not only supports small business and labor-connectors, but also it does not use excess fuel in shipping and materials in packaging. Makers and consumers of both the Arts & Crafts Movement and the contemporary craft climate are interested in the hand made and the unique that simply cannot be mass produced.

The Renegade Craft Fair is a prime example of this resurgence in goods to be bought and sold directly from the maker. The Renegade Craft Fair (RCF) is a large-scale marketplace event that features hundreds of artists who showcase and sell their handmade goods and original artwork. The fair is held yearly in urban epicenters of creative indie-entrepreneurship – including Brooklyn, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Austin, and London (UK). The Renegade Craft Fair feature artists with a DIY (do-it-yourself) background – who create innovative work using traditional craft methods. Each event features paper goods, house wares, ceramics, bath products, jewelry, craft kits, accessories, clothing, comics, plush objects, knits, curios, collectibles, artwork, and more. Other craft markets of locally produced goods have also become increasingly popular across the United States and Europe.

This growth in alternative markets is not unlike the increasing popularity in Farmers Markets and Green Markets. As consumers learn more about the climate crisis and how it relates to food production, many are

turning away from factory farms and mass processed foods from far away lands in exchange for fresh, locally grown and raised food. Community Supported Agriculture or CSA's are becoming another popular way for people to buy food directly from farmers. The same consciousness that consumers are using in purchasing food is being carried over into purchases of clothes, accessories, goods, and crafts. Consumers want to be in touch with makers, growers, and producers; they want to know that it came from a person and not a machine.

Etsy.com merges these ideas of the individually handmade with modern day Internet technologies to create a unique online market place. Etsy was started by Rob Kalin, a maker who struggled finding an outlet to sell his goods, and a consumer who was tired of "anonymous mass produced products". Etsy allows makers to create an online shop where they can sell their handmade goods from clothing and jewelry, to letterpress posters and works of art, to bath products and home goods. Four years after launching, Kalin was invited to speak at the World Economic Forum where he spoke specifically about Etsy's vision to "create millions of local economies that will create a sense of community in the economy again." As a result of Etsy's online success, many Etsy communities have popped up in physical space as well. Groups of crafters and makers get together to share resources, work on projects together, and help to promote each others works.

This type of work community is similar to those of the guilds formed in during the Arts & Crafts period. Morris & Co, The Century Guild, The Home Arts & Industries Association, The Art Workers Guild, are all examples of groups of artists, designer, architects, and makers who banded together to create work, share resources, and promote craft. The formation of these guilds and groups in the Arts & Crafts era is not unlike the formation of Etsy today. Many in the Arts and Crafts Movement were opposed to the division of labor or assembly lines of mass production where workers only made one piece of a whole. They preferred goods that were made by an individual or a small group of workers. While much of this can be seen as a rejection of the industrial revolution, mass produced products, and machinery, there is another way to view this way of working that links the worker back to the materials. Linking the worker back to the materials, then links the consumer to the materials via the worker. The desire for both consumers to feel connected to their producers, and the producers to be connected to materials is not unlike what is seen at the Renegade Craft Faire, local farmers markets, Etsy, fair trade practices, sweatshop free labor, organic local production, and many other situations in our current society.

A center point to both of these movements is the element of community and collaboration. In both of these times there is a shift away from labor-divisions, towards labor-connectors. Labor-divisions can be seen in any assembly line like situation, where workers only know how to assemble their one piece, without ever having to interact with the other pieces, or a greater a whole. No one person could likely build a television set. Rather, individuals build components that are later assembled into a whole. In some regards this same individualistic idealism is present in our technologically connected society. Trains are filled with commuters each with their own headsets and electronic devices; separated from a larger social setting, despite being in a public realm. Those involved in the Arts & Crafts movement, and it's contemporary resurgence are more interested in connecting laborers, bringing an appreciation to communal efforts, working together not as individuals, but working together as collaborators.

Mixed in with the rise of producing handmade goods, there has also been an increased interest in creating businesses around "sharing". Some are built on the platform of lessening ones environmental impact by purchasing less, while others are built on cost savings for individuals. Whatever the main reason, these businesses also engage in community development simply by sharing. Tool lending libraries are one example of this. In some communities, such as Berkeley, California, public libraries have locations for patrons to check out tools just as they would books. Other communities are developing these types of resources as privately owned businesses. Tool lending libraries allow borrowers to check out tools that they either cannot afford to buy, don't have the storage to keep, or maybe only need to use on a minimal basis. Car sharing companies such as Zip Car, City Car Share, and many others operate on a similar principal. As a result of the popularity of these types of companies many others have started to pop up as well - Netflix shares DVDs among millions of users. BabyBumps shares toys that children often quickly outgrow. Bag Borrow or Steal shares designer handbags, jewelry, and accessories for a fraction of their cost for purchase. Some call this boom in share type business a shift from "me" mentality to "we" mentality. People are thinking and acting collectively. Not just thinking about themselves in purchases and transactions but also thinking about the makers, the middlemen, neighbors, strangers, and others who can benefit from the same actions.

While makers in the Arts & Crafts Movement may not have approached "sharing" from the perspective, much of the movement was built on social criticisms of the times. Many in the movement were influenced by the socialist writings of John Ruskin. The rejection of the machine was in part a rejection of the poor working conditions by laborers and the division of class

that occurred through creating decorative excessive items for an impoverished state. William Morris, who later went on produce socialist writings of his own described a “true society” as one where “where neither luxuries nor cheap trash were made.” Morris and others in the Movement strived not only to create high quality, useful products, but also to create equality and a shared sense of community. Many of the guilds set up during the Arts & Crafts period were run as co-operatives. Charles Robert Ashbee, one of the key members of the Arts & Crafts Movement who established the Guild and School of Handicraft described his mission as to:

“seek not only to set a higher standard of craftsmanship, but at the same time, and in so doing, to protect the status of the craftsman. To this end it endeavors to steer a mean between the independence of the artist— which is individualistic and often parasitical— and the trade-shop, where the workman is bound to purely commercial and antiquated traditions, and has, as a rule, neither stake in the business nor any interest beyond his weekly wage”.

These co-operative workshop environments are not unlike the environments set up by Etsy, tool sharing libraries, or craft co-ops. These co-ops are also not unlike the contemporary sharing communities of ZipCar, Netflix, and other non-craft, sharing based businesses.

Art collectives, knitting circles, farmers markets, and co-op communities are not just a means of production, but also a community of support systems and social engagements. If Etsy has seven million registered users who are opting to buy and sell their wares to “build a new economy by living hand made”, what else could seven million people be capable of creating via these communities? The resurgence in themes from the Arts & Crafts Movement is all around us. Visually we see similarities in the designs and goods being produced. Consumers are demanding a higher quality product and a direct relationship to the makers and producers. Groups of people are coming together to form co-op communities. Given this resurgence of Arts & Crafts ideals, how can we use collaboration in craft as a social medium, a necessity to building, and as a larger system of creating community. We hold at this moment an incredible power to increase the common good.

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Abstract

This conceptual research paper forefronts the idea that we can look to re-purpose and translate the language and processes of design with the language and processes of pedagogy. This helps to facilitate what I refer to as being a 'pedagogic designer'. The intention here is to actively use art and design practice to visualise and give form to pedagogy, whereby we enhance our own understandings of pedagogy through a creative practice-based design process. By actively using 'design' we can start to understand pedagogy more fully through giving 'form' to create a pedagogic visual syntax. We can also address this in light of our educational experiences where we are increasingly becoming co-learners and act as producers or co-producers of learning within cross-cultural international social environments. We increasingly become educational 'animators' in breathing life into situations.

'we see the function of animators to be that of acting with learners, or with others, in situations where learning is an aspect of what is occurring, to assist them to work with their experience' (Boud & Miller, 1996 p7).

Introduction

A great deal of art and education struggles to see how we can positively make the bridge between our commercial 'professional' design practice and how this relates to a pedagogic practice. As design academics we have an 'idea' of what makes a design education that has been shaped by our professional experiences, however educationally, being a pedagogue and a designer are traditionally seen as two separate roles or inputs. We can even go as far as to say that pedagogy is secondary to what we teach as designers. There is a need therefore to explore the language and actions of pedagogy 'through' design—we can call this pedagogic design. We might ask the question what is a pedagogic designer? The connection between being a designer and educator and marrying this with being a pedagogic designer is a rich one. As designers we interpret information, play with semantics and give form. These skills and experiences need to be brought to the front of our role as educators as we develop interactive experiences for our students. Being pedagogic designers will become increasingly vital as we move from simple information givers to facilitators and explore other forms of pedagogic delivery that are rel-

evant to ever changing work, job environments, design employers and importantly how this engenders creativity and collaboration. We will progressively become more like active interventionists in the learning space.

This paper highlights a project, which conceptually illustrates the role of the 'pedagogic designer' and starts to address how might we articulate this role through a learning environment. This research case study centres on an international cross-cultural postgraduate art and design learning environment. Throughout, I use the term cross-cultural, in this context it is working with an international context where we deal with issues of otherisation, essentialism and identity (see Holliday et al, 2004). The project explores these issues predominantly through the media of digital video, photography and design processes. The research indirectly references the work of Charles and Ray Eames who had produced educational films from the 1960s. They saw the relevance of design as being integral to our daily life and as such an active way of experiential learning. Much of this paper draws and builds upon a previous paper by the author entitled: 'Developing communities of practice and research through research-informed teaching and learning in cross-cultural groups', (CLTAD, 2009).

Context

This research is set within a backdrop of key areas for attention which are the increasing complexities of:

- the research/teaching/learning nexus and relationships (Jenkins & Healey, 2005)
- animated learning (Boud & Miller, 1996)
- developing communities of practice (Wenger, 1998)
- cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary collaborative work (Lubart, 2004)

The research methodologies used were predominantly qualitative through problem solving and action research but incorporated methods of video ethnography, and practice based pedagogic research. It is also situated within a pedagogic research-informed teaching approach where teaching draws directly upon enquiry into the teaching and learning process itself (Jenkins & Healey, 2005). Qualitative methods incorporated were cross-cultural international focus groups attended by students, 'unstructured' interviews,

student case studies and, importantly, practice-based work. The paper highlights how an active educational model can be developed through learning by doing (Gibbs, 1998) and thinking (Ramsden, 2003), however, coming from a perspective which addresses creativity through practice-based collaboration across cultures (Lubart, 2004).

Let's have a cross-cultural picnic!

We decided to have an open picnic; a social gathering that took place unusually internally within a newly refurbished art and design building. Its intention was to:

- to explore 'communities of practice' within a 'picnic' environment
- to explore the nexus between teaching/learning and research
- to articulate the language of design and pedagogy by animating social, communicative and improvised cross-cultural learning spaces.

However, a further intention was to institutionally highlight the international post-graduate community within the university by bringing together this community of staff and students. The picnic concept references the work of Charles and Ray Eames. It specifically references the film 'Powers of Ten' made in 1968 which starts from the position of a couple having a picnic on a lakeside in Chicago; the film zooms out from the picnic to 'outer' space and subsequently zooms back in to the picnic. I referenced this moving from a macro to micro perspectives exploring what happened therein within the community of staff and students, attending to the conversations and facilitating the improvised collaborative events. The idea and the manifestation of a picnic was culturally and creatively challenging in itself especially working within cross-cultural international groups. I was culturally sensitive as to how the event would be made visible. The project was given the working title 'Feast' where students were invited to bring self-made 'traditional' food and non-alcoholic drinks from their respective countries. 'Traditional' music was compiled before the event and played during the event. Students were represented from numerous countries across the world. Staff were on hand to facilitate and interact within this learning experience. Working as a pedagogic designer, a space was 'designed' within the building for the picnic utilising dot and cross pattern-making paper that formed a tablecloth for the event. This was carefully positioned to form an 'X' shaped tablecloth at ground level. Picnickers were invited to bring whatever they wanted to the event, rugs, chairs, eating utensils and importantly food and drinks. See Figure 1.



Figure 1



Figure 2

During the picnic, students were given cameras to interview each other about their respective picnics (Figure 2), the picnic was also filmed using video cameras and an art direction/design/filmmaking approach was taken with the intention of producing an edited 'designed' film as a result. We used multiple sources for the data gathering. Documenting photographers, and improvised documentation of the event by students as participants. Two stationary cameras were carefully positioned to 'frame' the event and also giving an objective two-point perspective on the whole event. A 'process of inquiry' (Breen et al, 2003) was positively 'animated' (Boud, 1996). The space was designed with the intention of creating an open social learning space and to examine how the cross-cultural groups and staff reacted to the space to form 'communities of practice' (see Wenger, 1998). The community of practice models developed by Wenger helped us to contextualise further the research work. I was able to conceptualise and draw on the four basic dimensions needed for the challenge of designing for learning, namely: participation/reification, designed/emergent, local/global, identification/negotiability (Wenger, 1998, p232). I also reflected upon how Wenger addresses the three core components needed for a learning architecture: imagination, alignment, and engagement. (Wenger, 1998, p237). This intrigued me in the context of the event and the relation of the utilisation of the learning space to whether students and staff converged or not within the exploration of the social spaces. Also of great interest is how staff would intervene or not within a designed yet still improvised learning space, and how they could form their own research and learning investigation within such a setting.

The data was evaluated and a short 'film' was produced working with a motion graphic specialist and academic, Jon Hamilton. The film, Event digestion, a pedagogic filmic picnic (Figure 3), was subsequently deconstructed and analysed from design practice and pedagogic perspectives as part of the research process. While analysing the film, we turned the cameras on ourselves and recorded our own deconstruction of the film (Figure 4). This process is an interesting one where we turned pedagogic reflection simultaneously into a practice through the act of filmmaking. We reflected on our work by creating an accidental pedagogic practice. It became a film about a film capturing our own practice as pedagogues and being pedagogic designers.



Figure 3

The research approach has much in common with ethnography, in which the researcher tries to make meaning of both the explicit and tacit knowledge of cultural settings and social behaviour where we strove to investigate through the explication of the picnic. Significantly, the resulting film allows you to understand the invisible aspects of pedagogy and research through visual means, acting as a way to visualise your research and pedagogy. The process is a fascinating one. By working with a motion graphics specialist I was able to intervene throughout using the design words of cut, edit, by compositionally visually highlighting significant pedagogic moments in the work. These highlights resulted in the emergence of a pedagogic filmic syntax based around pedagogic enquiry. The intention was to visualise central pedagogic aspects, whereby we enhance our own understanding through a creative practice-based process. Interestingly, we started to naturally adopt and adapt the language of both design and pedagogy to deconstruct the space in enhancing our understanding. When ethnography is applied to 'design', in this case the editing of the film, and also contextualised through pedagogic theory, it helps educators, designers and students to create further research into teaching and learning and also, fundamentally in this study to enable us to understand the complexity of people and culture within education environments.

As pedagogic designers we utilised the media of film, and the tools of the camera to analyse, understand and give form to pedagogy. You make decisions as you view things through a lens, it enables you to have an objective and subjective eye, allowing you to assess the situation and reflect upon it. The designer Charles Eames used the camera in such a reflective and analytical way. When developing a product prototype Charles Eames would use the camera as a creative but also an analytical, reflective tool. Dick Donges states that 'Charles had a terrific eye. He'd do a piece of furniture and not until he looked at that piece of furniture through a camera could he make really any criticism. But once he started photographing it, he knew exactly what was wrong with it.' In other words, photography is not something that happens at the end of the process so you sell furniture, but for Charles and Ray Eames, it was actually part of the process of designing it. (see: <http://www.eamesoffice.com/photography>). To reiterate the point further by using the film editing process we were able to look and give form to pedagogy.



Figure 4

Otherisation, essentialism and identity

The picnic was an opportunity to form a community and also to explore cultural identity within an international cohort. I was conscious of creating an environment where I wanted to design an environment, which consisted of inquiry-based activities without any obvious curricula. This was based on Jenkins and Healey's work (2005, p21) on the relationship between learning, teaching and research. I was interested in the inter-relationships between staff and students when creating a staged yet improvised space without any over planning and how this would inform staff, student learning and live research. I realized that some staff might be uncomfortable in such open situations. The event drew on the typology of a teaching-research nexus developed by Griffiths in 2004 (see Jenkins and Healey's, 2005, p21) where:

Teaching can be research-based in the sense that the curriculum is largely designed around inquiry-based activities, rather than on the acquisition of subject content; the experiences of staff in processes of inquiry are highly integrated into the student learning activities; the division of roles between teacher and student is minimised; the scope for two-way interactions between research and teaching is deliberately exploited.

In this research food was used as a central cultural talking point and enabled subtle cultural referents to emerge that were discussed by staff and students during the event. The subtle points discussed enabled us to consider and attend to

the bigger issues when working within cross-cultural groups issues of otherisation, essentialism and identity. Contextually as a design educator working within Western paradigms of design it is easy to fall into the stereotypical trap of Japanese design students are predominantly like this, Indian design students like that and as such leading to forms of cultural stereotyping. From a Western position we can often operate from our own personal cultural practices in art and design education, and whilst this makes a valuable contribution to the specialist skills and knowledge required for art and design, we are in danger of operating from a one-point Western, Euro-centric perspective. This can seem quite narrow when confronted by indigenous individuals who do not easily latch on to the modernist/post-modernist/Western mind set when it comes to design practice, education and cultural referents. Nisbett (2005). The video work helped us to really understand and contextualise this further. Dangerously, when working with international students we can 'otherise' them, otherisation not in the Derrida sense but in a term derived from social scientists and inter-culturists when discussing the nature of culture. We imagine 'someone as alien and different to 'us' in such a way that 'they' are excluded from 'our' 'normal', 'superior' and 'civilized' group. Henry Steiner in the seminal book 'cross-cultural design' adds the human dimension and discusses virtues of cross-cultural pollination when dealing with otherisation by stating that designers need to have 'humility in the presence of other cultures, understanding and respect for alternative ways of approaching life. And the invaluable sense of distance in seeing —albeit briefly the exotic as commonplace and one's beliefs as being after all alien.' (Steiner & Haas, 1995, p9). There is a danger in design education where there pervades educationally too much of an 'essentialist' (Holliday et al, 2004, p3) culture, where design education is viewed from closed cultural reference points. Whereas in a progressive 'non-essentialist' culture we learn to see culture in a more complex way; it is more fluid, 'a creative social force, which binds different groupings and aspects of behaviour in different ways' (Holliday et al. 2004, p3). Therefore, the role as an educator is to discover or open up the flowing of culture. Through designed events such as the picnic we begin to realize 'the other' and 'the self', but significantly it also becomes more about the importance of collaboration. Students while working within cross-cultural groupings start

to understand themselves and their own 'culture' and as such students engage in a stronger understanding of their own identity. The event as such was designed to enable cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural work, it allowed us to open up new cultural dialogues and engage in learning through an experience.

Conclusions

The video research work enabled us to understand further the cultural influences on behaviour, which are often difficult to understand using other methods. It was used throughout the process to help us gain an enhanced experiential understanding of social cross-cultural educational environments enabling us to pay attention to essentialism, otherisation and exploring issues of identity. The interesting relationship between the video ethnography and grounding it within a design practice is extremely exciting. How through being 'pedagogic designers' and through the staging and editing of sequences we are able to understand meanings over a period of edits. The cameras enabled the students to take a greater participation in the event. As academics we were also in a process of facilitating 'research learning' through collaboration. We were able to animate learning by bringing into life with connotations to inspire, to vivify and in this case make it an intrinsic core part of our teaching, learning and research. Staff became 'animators' for learning (Boud & Miller, 1996).

By working with a motion graphics specialist I intervened in the film through the purposeful cutting and editing to elicit pedagogic highlights giving the work a new pedagogic syntax based around pedagogic enquiry. The intention was to try to visualize pedagogy whereby we enhance our own understanding through a creative process. We used the language of both design and pedagogy to deconstruct the space and to enhance our understanding. The film produced became the educational crafted product of the event.

Student learning is about dealing with 'uncertainty', the 'unknowing', dealing with 'meaning' and the complex mix of art/design/life, a community of practice helps to enable this to take place. Conversely staff can find it more difficult as we become institutionalised in our ways of doing and thinking as educators. If we liberate our experi-

ences and teaching through a design approach we can start to see it is an integrated hands on process that is transferable to teaching and learning.

Communities of practice is now a major transferable and core skill, arguably it should be integrated into our teaching, it enables us to make cross-cultural moves where individualistic and collectivist environments are explored. Importantly, when ethnography is applied to design in this case through the process of film and also contextualized through pedagogic theory, it helps educators/ designers/students to create further research and fundamentally enables us to understand the complexity of people and culture within education and society. Staff and students need to take part and understand further the research/ learning/teaching nexus and their relationships. The importance here is how we can use design processes to inform pedagogy and also enable us to critically reflect on this. The ethnographic methodology combined with a design analysis and practice provided substantially greater insight.

In final conclusion, there is real opportunity to fully explore the idea of being a pedagogic designer where we can act upon the vast experience we have as designers with those of being educators. And as such, speak to pedagogy from new varied approaches and importantly also adopt approaches which embrace a world-view of design education. The relationship between being a designer and marrying this with being a pedagogic designer is a rich one and opens up new grounds for research and practice. By addressing the language/ process of the two we can have confidence in opening up new relations and practices for design education through being a pedagogic designer.

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Abstract

This paper reflects on a collaboration in 2010 in India that involved artist Cj O'Neill and anthropologist Amanda Ravetz. As a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural exchange, our project fits the academic interest in collaboration that emerged strongly in the 1990s and continues to grow. But given the difficulties as well as the successes of working across different knowledges and practices, what is it we actually value about collaborations of this kind? Anthropologist James Leach suggests that the value we give to collaboration rests on the power we give to combination, which in turn invokes a mode of creativity he calls 'dispersed'. Taking up Leach's idea of 'dispersed creativity', we focus in this paper on two different ways of assigning value to our work in India. The first depends on highlighting and celebrating the combinations that led to the outcomes and the outcomes themselves. The second involves assigning value to forms of creativity that remain dispersed between agents. Attempting this, as Leach reminds us, challenges our tendencies to detach creativity from its generative conditions in order to register its effects in external objects. It means valuing modes of creativity seen, for example, in the way work done by one person registers in the changes and growth of another.

Introduction and organisation of the paper

Collaboration has been part of craft, design and art environments for a long time, whether implicitly or explicitly. Mark Dunhill & Tamiko O'Brien have argued that from the mid 1990s onwards, collaboration became a mainstream activity - one of the numerous ways that artists could choose to operate (1). Yet they suggest that artistic collaboration

"still raises some interesting and crucial questions about the nature of authorship, authenticity and the artists' relationships to their works & audiences that inevitably disrupts the persistent and popular image of the artist as a 'heroic' solitary figure."

Dunhill's and O'Brien's evocation of the solitary 'artist as hero' prompts us to question whether authorship and relationships to audiences have in fact worked in the same way in craft and design environments as they have in fine art. As areas renowned for working with materials and/or in teams (2), craft's and design's historical emphasis on collaboration may even explain their demotion relative to areas wedded to notions of

autonomy, as well as their recent rise as cooperation has found favour again. Viewed in this way, we suggest there is much to learn from the way makers draw on their experiences of working with materials, with publics and with other makers, especially when they move into social contexts beyond their own.

It is against this backdrop we wish to set our experience of a project in Ahmedabad, India in October 2010, involving a collaboration between ourselves - anthropologist and filmmaker Amanda Ravetz and artist maker and designer Cj O'Neill - and artists Steven Dixon and Lokesh Ghai, environmentalist/communications expert Palak Chitalya and residents from Fadiya Chok, Dhal ni Pol. It may be that it was our reliance on each other that orientated us towards what anthropologist James Leach calls 'dispersed creativity' (3), also challenging our conceptualisation of materials as inanimate/inert and of creativity as contingent - available only sometimes and to some people; and that being open to this mode of creativity made certain ethical and political dilemmas more visible to us than they might otherwise have been, raising questions about how and where we should assign value to the project (4).

We begin by explaining the circumstances of our collaboration, the wider project and our reasons for beginning to work together. We then reflect briefly on precedents for combining anthropology and design/craft, before describing the project outcomes. In the following section we reveal a slightly different narrative, this time focusing on some of the difficulties and tensions we experienced. These were provoked to a large degree by our own and others' relationships with the objects that were produced during our time in Ahmedabad. We attempt to think through the implications of these two narratives with recourse to James Leach's discussion of dispersed and appropriative modes of creativity allowing us to understand what might have been happening around the objects in our collaboration. This leads us to suggest that the tensions we experienced relate to ways of thinking about social networks which in turn suggests the need to make visible and to give value to something other than (or as well as), objects - for example to materials in flow and to 'longer' rather than 'shorter' networks.

The circumstances of our collaboration

Our month-long residency was based at Arts Reverie, an artist's house in Ahmedabad that for five years has

been bringing Indian makers and international artists together in various exchange programmes. The brief we were working to originate in a PAL lab at Arts Reverie in February 2010 where representatives from different agencies met to discuss ways for artists, environmentalists and residents of Dhal ni Pol to tackle a number of local environmental issues (5). A few weeks before the project was due to start the environmental partners pulled out due to a clash with another project and we decided, in their absence, to take the topic 'Making Beauty' – the theme of the Ahmedabad International Arts festival (AIAF) in which the competed work would be shown – as a touchstone for our enquiry into the environment of the pol.

Arts Reverie is located in one of approximately 600 'pols' found on the east side of the city of Ahmedabad. Pols are high density neighbourhoods that were once homogeneous communities associated with different castes but are today increasingly heterogeneous. Historically pols comprised 'a labyrinth of high wooden houses, streets too narrow for wheeled traffic, and cul-de-sacs.' A pol would have had 'only one, or at the most two entrances (apart from secret ones), one main street with crooked lanes branching off either side, and walls and gates (now removed) which were barred at night' (6). Today the narrow streets, the out-dated services and the dilapidated state of many buildings are contributing to out migration from the east to the west side of city - 'modern' Ahmedabad - which boasts newer dwellings and infrastructure. In response Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation have developed a revitalisation programme whose purpose is to 'inculcate community participation in supporting a programme to conserve and celebrate the heritage "urbanscape" of this part of Ahmedabad' (7).

Given this emphasis on community participation both from the original lab and the AMC, our priority was to engage with people living near Arts Reverie to develop our work in ways that would be congruent with their existing concerns. The project team consisted of three UK researchers - Cj, Amanda and the artist Steven Dixon (principal investigator); and two Indian researchers - the artist Lokesh Ghai, who took the role of project manager (and who was also collaborating with Steve on a separate project for the AIAF), and Palak Chitaliya who had consulted with local people about environmental conditions on previous occasions and had good relationships with people living in Dhal ni Pol. Our attempts to get to know people were helped not only by Palak and Lokesh, but by the timing of our visit which coincided with Navratri, a festival of dancing lasting nine nights, something we joined in with and that greatly eased our entry into Dhal ni Pol.

Although we had envisaged supporting one another as a team, for us (Cj and Amanda) this cooperation

went beyond discussing ideas or sharing resources. While tracking how our collaboration developed it has sometimes been difficult to remember who came up with an idea or who did what. Part of the explanation for our close collaboration relates to affinities between what we each brought to the project - the fact we are both committed to working with people and interested in the relationship people have to materials, while also each having different skills, media and ways of theorising. In our first week in Dhal ni Pol we focused on social relationships, the objects people use and the built environment (8). These foci depended both on what we were seeing and experiencing, and also on the pre-occupations we brought with us (9). We noticed for example the social importance of the liminal spaces of the otlas – wide steps outside houses where people socialise; and how people asked us to take photographic portraits of them posing formally in their doorways. Our research crystallised into ideas for work when we began to see how we could use the camera to provoke and document things we were bringing to the situation and noticing were already there.

The work we eventually made came about through Cj wanting to find visual stories with which to decorate chai ceramics and Amanda wanting to find a way to continue her work on reverie and play. Through various discussions and permutations, we arrived at an idea for an event which would take place over one day – a doorway, reflecting the space of the otlas, would be set up in a public space and people invited to interact with it while Amanda recorded material from a fixed point and Cj took photographic portraits.

We negotiated with Mayur Fadiya, a moped mechanic in Dhal ni Pol, to set up the doorway outside his house, in the street, on the auspicious day of Dushera, the festival that ends Navratri. The event consisted of a DVD camera at a fixed point recording people's interactions with the doorway, with Cj taking still shots, an invitation to people to pose and be photographed in the doorway. The recording was edited into a 15 minute film called Entry and shown to a large crowd in the same space where it had been filmed one week later, and then at the British Council Library and at Arts Reverie as part of the AIAF (11). For Cj the event provided her with a narrative around which to build a series of ceramic pieces using hand cut transfers and these pieces were then shown at Arts Reverie and British Council Library (12). All in all what each of us could have done separately was enhanced and extended by working together, pooling ideas and resources to the extent that we eventually made an entire event that served both our needs, while also allowing us to produce two quite distinctive outcomes and objects. The press were complimentary about the project and many people in the pol seemed very happy with the outcomes. During the project the team ran three work-

shops which over a hundred children attended. We gave people copies of their portraits and of the film and we were invited by several people to come back to India and work in a school in the pol and take part in the kite festival.

Dilemmas and difficulties

However, the account we've just given suggesting a successful project based on affinities between our two fields and on our positive relationships with local people, leaves out several crucial things. These can be summed up in three short scenarios:

On Amanda's last night when having screened the film, someone who had taken a large part in the filming was angry that she had not given him a dvd with everything she had filmed on it, rather than just giving him with the edited film. In fact Amanda had been unable to fit all the material onto one dvd in time and the material has now been supplied, but what this moment of high tension revealed was how at this point of leaving, we were or seemed to be appropriating something that up until this moment there had not been any obvious dispute about.

A child who had decorated a cup and saucer during a workshop was asked if she would like them to be included in an exhibition at the British Council library. A prestigious event in some ways, proudly, she told Cj that it just wouldn't be possible as her Father drank tea only from that cup now and he wouldn't be very happy if he had to use something else, even for a few days and so her work was not included in this exhibition.

Parshottam, the chai walla who we came to know during our stay in Dhal ni Pol and who sold tea at the three day AIAF event, was given by Cj a series of gold spot cups to use on his stall, or at home, as was Mayur Fadiya, the moped mechanic who did a lot to make it possible for us to set up the doorway and who encouraged his friends and family to join in the filming; a tea service was gifted to the British Council Library in Ahmedabad to have on display; each child that decorated a cup in the workshop received a cup (perhaps not always the one they decorated, but a cup!); Devi Singh, Mohan and Mohanlil who work at Arts Reverie each received a cup. But not everyone we worked with or met were given a cup and saucer - there were not enough to go around.

Each of these stories highlights issues obscured in our first account of the collaboration, notably the contributions and roles of people living in Dhal ni Pol, their reactions to the objects and their feelings about the ownership of the objects. Thinking about the reactions noted here – and others too numerous to mention – makes us wonder who the authors of the film and

ceramics were, who should have rights over the film, ceramics etc and what else, apart from the objects, might be at stake.

Assigning value in collaborations

Explaining what makes cross disciplinary collaborations such as ours a success often involves pointing out both the differences and the affinities between the collaborating agents, the understanding being that it is through cross fertilisation that new things – innovation, novelty - occur. The growing cross fertilisation between our two areas, art and anthropology, has been explained using concepts such as the 'ethnographic turn' in artistic practice, and more recently, the 'artistic turn' in research. (13) As anthropology has moved towards more performative understandings of both the world and itself, so art has become increasingly intent upon making its knowledge and the contexts for its operation explicit, whether through social contextualisation of its practices, or by engaging with social and critical theory to confront its own 'ways of knowing'. (14).

But evaluating the success of collaborations using notions of cross fertilisation has been critiqued in the past. Writing in 1991, Rogoff was concerned with the way artistic collaborations were being justified in terms of 'cross fertilisation' while quickly reverting back tropes of heroic individualism so that singular figures rather than more collective forms of authorship were being given recognition (15). Given our suggestion that part of the value of our collaboration lies in cross fertilisation, how might this critique be pertinent to us?

Two things seem to jump out. One that we restricted our description of cross fertilisation to ourselves, failing to mention all the other elements that went into the creativity we were involved in. Thus having invoked cross cultural and cross disciplinary potential, we quickly obscured it again to talk about our success. Two, in order to verify our creativity and success we pointed to the objects, as if it were only in the objects we might register the effects of our creative efforts. How then might we think about the collaboration differently – can we only point to the objects and the changes made to our understanding – or is there another way of valuing – and feeling excited, enlightened, aesthetically moved – by what happened? We turn for help to anthropologist James Leach. Working in PNG, he has long been concerned with questions of ownership. PNG is recognised by anthropologists as exemplifying different understandings of ownership and personhood to our own and as an anthropologist comparing PNG and Euro-American ways of conceiving of the world Leach suggests that underpinning questions about authorship, ownership, intellectual property rights and collaboration are some fundamental

assumptions we tend to make about creativity which link to our ways of assigning ownership and authorship in e.g. IPR (14). Leach identifies three elements that permeate what he calls dominant Euro-American ways of thinking about creativity:

We tend to recognize creativity where combinations of things or ideas are apparent.

We expect that this process of combination has been directed by a will or intent.

We deduce creativity using evidence of novelty of form or outcome.

Purposeful, intended collaborations seem to evoke all three of these elements – thus in our presentation of our collaboration in India we emphasised combination of skills, people, subject areas, cultures; will and intent in that we deliberately set out to use our creativity to make something; and novelty in that the film and ceramics were unique to our cross fertilisation rather than e.g. traditional renderings and that each of our practices was changed/reformed by the experience.

But Leach insists that although this is a dominant model of creativity, there is another mode we are also aware of, although we are less likely to articulate it or to assign value to it. In this mode

creativity is immanent in all moments,
it is distributed through creation.

It is not the preserve or property of a particular institution or deity.

Leach describes distributive creativity using the example of people of Reite in Papua New Guinea with whom he did his fieldwork, who “appropriate from nature, produce objects, and own them, but they understand this as the creation of persons.” (our emphasis). For Reite people:

Models of ownership are not based on an appropriative creativity, but on a distributed creativity. Humanity is defined by the necessity of embodying and acting creatively.

People themselves are valuable rather than the emphasis being put on objects.

Reite people let ritual objects such as Torr posts in the bush rot away and the effect of this ‘demonstration’ of objects is to see ‘creativity’ as distributed throughout existence.

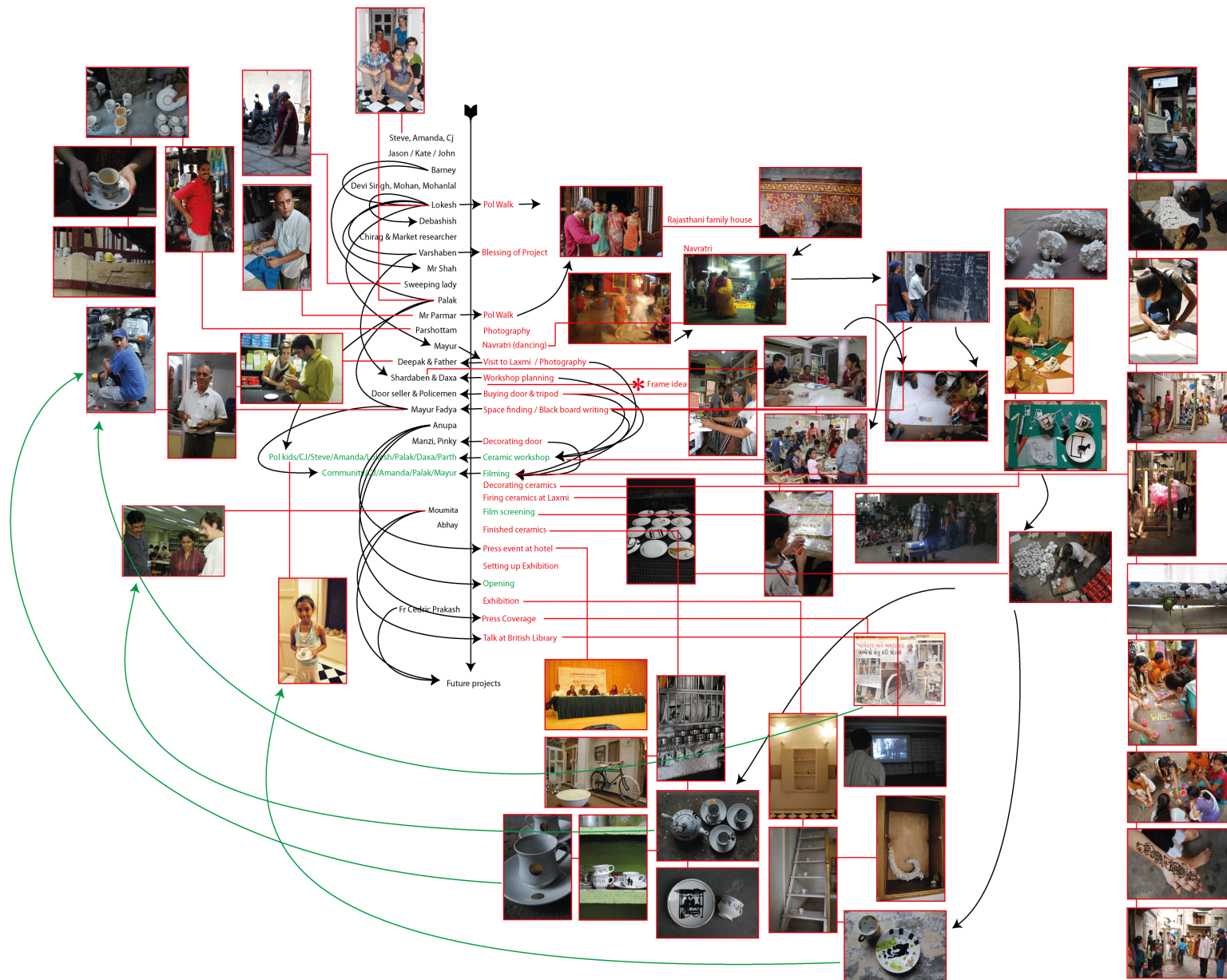
By contrast in dominant Euro-American ways of thinking about creativity, “IPR has the effect of concentrating creativity in particular individuals, and then in individual kinds of mental operation which amount to forms of appropriation by the subject.” As Wagner points out, ‘Westerners’ value the objects, the out-

comes of creativity: ‘we keep the ideas, the quotations, the memoirs, the creations and let the people go. Our attics ...[and] museums are full of this kind of culture’ (Wagner 1975: 26).

In the first account we gave of our collaboration we emphasized working together as an artist and anthropologist and coming away with outputs in the form of a film and some ceramic pieces. Next we talked about the flip side of this, where these objects came to be the focus of different claims, and in the case of the film, of disputes about who owned these objects. Similar disputes in socially engaged or participatory projects are often dealt with by levelling out these claims on objects – films might be made by participants with the help of artists and anthropologists and exhibited alongside work made by artists –or produced by collectives. But in these cases what is more or less unchallenged, is the idea that the ‘results’ or the ‘effects of creativity are registered in objects, rather than in people. Thinking about our collaboration in India we realised that much of the value for us lies in the work that others had ‘done in us’ – they had lent themselves not only to our project but as an effect of this, to the success that would register in us as persons – in our careers, our earning potential and so on. To this extent we were operating through a dispersed rather than an appropriative mode.

Visible networks

How then might we find ways to make this kind of creativity visible – and assign value to it? And what would the problems with this be? Thinking about whose creativity had registered its effects in us, one of the problems turns out to be where to draw a line around the network of people who helped us. We began to map out some of the many connections – the complex system – that underpinned what we were able to do while we were in Dhal ni Pol.



In this drawing we can trace the way

Barney introduced us to Lokesh, who took us on a walk round the Pol and from this we developed a practice of walking most days and meeting people. We met a Rajasthani family, who had beautiful floor tiles, they also told us about Navratri, the dancing festival. That night, walking home in the Pol, we arrived to a scene of dancing in the street, and were invited to join in! Whilst looking for spaces in the Pol, we met Mayur Fadiya, the local moped mechanic, who said we could use the square where he mended the mopeds. He then was able to help us get notices put up on the blackboards in the Pol. There was more dancing, this time in a slightly different area, with Mayur's family and friends. Manzi used the patterns that Cj had drawn from the Rajasthani house tiles to decorate the door we bought. We ran some ceramics workshops with local children, including Manzi's brother. Amanda filmed through the doorway in the middle of

the Pol. on the Dushera festival. Cj used images from the filming to decorate a series of cups and saucers. There was a film screening in the Pol – everyone was invited through the blackboards again. There was a lot of press interest, and we gave a talk at the British Council library, where we screened Entry and showed some of Cj's ceramics alongside some of Daksha and Parth's.

Our uncertainty about where to draw the line relates to what another anthropologist of Papua New Guinea, Stuart Kirsch, has talked about in relation to disputes over compensation claims on the Island of Lihir, east of Papua New Guinea, where the death of a number of pigs was the subject of compensation claims made to the Lihir Management Corporation who run the gold mine. Making these claims, Kirsch points out that Papuans brought long networks of social relations into view – they argued that a series of events linked the mine to the death of the pigs including construction of the mine which forced people to relocate, the new land lacking resources to support the number of pigs, resulting in malnutrition causing many pigs to die. (16) By contrast the Euro-American counter-claims operated by attempting to cut the networks short – arguing it was not their (social and ethical) responsibility that the pigs had died, and this could not be proved to be a direct result of their actions in taking over the land. The Euro-American approach, like our own, worked to obscure the social relations between the people, the pigs and the mine.

Conclusions

The assigning of value to collaboration depends on more than one understanding of creativity. Novelty can be registered outside the relationships that produced it; but creation can also be seen as immanent, always available, so that value is about the work each of us does in others – or does not do when they should. Pivotal to these perspectives are ways of understanding people, places and things as either relations formed between ourselves and separate objects in which we make individual ownership claims, or as longer social networks in which there may be many claims made around the work done in other people. Leach is careful to point out that distributed creativity is not just the preserve of Papua New Guineans. He suggests that an artist like William Blake was also talking about distributed creativity in his poetry. Might it be that makers are also accustomed to creativity in a distributed mode, because of their relationship with materiality which involves a dissolution of person/object boundaries -- until that is the thing is “finished” and the appropriative mode takes over.

Returning to the UK, the objects removed from the context of relationships, and presented in the context of an academic institution they become mine/ours; viewed as an output, and we describe them as such. But what this of course obscures is the ‘otherness’ in the pieces. The subjects, objects, origin of the cups; the firing of the transfer; the translation, advice, conversation, filming, placement and testing; the sounds, smells and sights of the Pol that contributed. Can Cj place a monetary value on this, could she sell this work? The titles of the film acknowledge others but

the authorship is Amanda's – what kind of aesthetic would allow the ongoing reciprocities to be registered as creative? How can value be articulated within the academic world, gain monetary value in the economic reality of making a living, and still contain the value of dispersed creativity?

We suggest that as interesting and we hope aesthetically pleasing as the objects are, are the social relations that engendered them, the complex meshworks that the anthropologist Ingold imagines as mycelium. With this in mind let us return to the question of what we can learn by drawing on experiences of working with materials, with publics and with other makers, especially in social contexts beyond our own. If we bring together anthropological readings of collaboration that tie questions of authorship into different modes of creativity – appropriative and dispersed, with maker's relationships to materials where the contribution of the material remains visible, can we arrive at an alternative possibility for collaboration in which the relationship between objects, and networks, and the choices about how to work with them becomes a little clearer? Perhaps, though we should be clear that dispersed creativity is no guarantee of utopia! Recent anthropological work on moral economies and the effects money is having on reciprocal networks suggests increasing problems caused by these different understandings of creativity where those who keep networks long are under increasing monetary obligations to their relations.

Moving into another social context than our own gave a new urgency to questions we have discussed in this paper. As an artist maker and designer Cj always knew that the value of the objects she produced was directly related to the people, places and/or objects she came experienced. But using this new language introduced by Amanda, and looking through the dispersed creativity lens at projects allows her to explore new ways of presenting these objects, articulating their value and exploring fully the potential of them to connect people and place.

For Amanda seeing collaboration, something frequently discussed in anthropology, mediated through objects, made the movement from dispersed to appropriative forms of creativity much clearer. The contribution to her understanding by Cj and others gave her a new understanding of possibilities to create in a way that is about people-in-the-making– and as this feeds into future work she wonders what kind of claims those who put their creativity into her will be moved to make.

For both of us applying this will always be complex, particularly within the academic environment, but we hope there may be ways to exist on the boundary between established systems, working on projects that can be valued in a number of different ways.

Notes

1. www.collabarts.org
2. Jorunn Veiteberg 2005
3. James Leach 2004
4. We were very aware of our reliance on Palak and Lokesh for linguistic and cultural guidance, and on the hospitality of people in Dhal ni Pol. If we had entertained the idea before that we could create in isolation or that creativity originates in one person's mind, then this belief would have been hard to sustain in this project.
5. The Pol Project artslab see http://www.pallabs.org/portfolio/timeline/here_and_there_lab_10_02/
6. From Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History by Kenneth L. Gillion. University of California Press 1968 p25
7. From Ahmedabad: Becoming A World Heritage City Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation 2010
8. Experienced through e.g. dancing; visiting neighbours; interviewing professionals; visiting the children's library; running workshops for children; photographing people when requested to; chai ceramics; flowers; bicycles; noting e.g. the khadkis (house-groups); framed and/or liminal spaces of e.g. the opla – wide steps outside houses; the public squares and the chubutaras (bird feeders)
9. Cj is an artist trained in design who teaches on the craft route of the MA design Lab at MMU and is a PhD student at MIRIAD. (8). Her previous work has included a number of projects with people, an example being the Wesley Project. The Wesley in Manchester UK is an organisation that supplies furniture, domestic appliances, household goods and clothing at the lowest possible prices to those in greatest need from all over the City of Manchester. They collect donations of most household items city wide. These are then sorted, stored and sold from their shops and delivered for a nominal charge. During the Wesley Project Cj worked with Lee Garland and the staff and volunteers of Wesley Community Furniture, Manchester to document the activities, objects and people who work with the charity through documentary photography and interviews, interpreting and developing this in a various ways, in order to create works that could be later sold to raise money and awareness for the charity. See Cj's website: http://www.cjoneill.co.uk/about_cj.php

Amanda is a Research Fellow at MMU trained in visual anthropology with expertise in observational cinema and crossings and collaborations between anthropology and art (9). Her approach is to examine the way social relations and material goings-on are imbricated together -- rather than 'culture' and 'meaning' being laid on top of or projected on to environments and material worlds. Amanda's current research is about play and reverie, a theme that emerged from her studies of observational cinema. A film she made at the

end of 2009 about the disabled artist Ian Partridge, shows how the space of the painting and the working area around it act as a framing of a liminal, dreamlike space in which Partridge is free to play and improvise, giving him a measure of autonomy that is difficult for him to achieve in other areas of his life. See e.g. Grimshaw and Ravetz (eds.) 2005. *Visualizing Anthropology*: Intellect Books, Bristol, UK and Oregon, USA; Ravetz 2007 *Connecting Art and Anthropology* (website and Cd-Rom); Grimshaw and Ravetz 2009. *Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film and the Exploration of Social Life*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

10. Entry was selected for screening at the SIEF Ethnographic Film Screening 2011 Lisbon 18th 20th April FCSH-UNL

11. Details about Cj's outputs

12. See for example Hal Foster's essay *The Artist as Ethnographer* and Kathleen Coessens et al in their book *'The Artistic Turn'*

13. In many ways the discipline of anthropology rests on revealing or making explicit the assumptions on which seemingly commonsense actions, beliefs and social structures rest. While once this was something ideally achieved through cultural dislocation, the 1960s and onwards saw a shift to a position where anthropology could happen in contexts familiar to the researcher, albeit retaining the ability to reveal structures normally unseen and unexamined. This made anthropology seem more like the strand of contemporary art that according to Kester in his book *Conversation Pieces* relied on conceptual /perceptual shifts effected by the work on the audience which, whether slow burn, relational or dialogic as proposed by those like Kester, or more immediate, Zen-like or shocking associated with modernism, were about penetrating the familiar and habitual in order to see something as strange again. This converges with what anthropologist Elisabeth Colson in her 1985 Malinowski Lecture talked of as anthropology's dedication to 'uncomfortable knowledge' "It is a common charge that social sciences including anthropology, are unable to produce results in the form of generalizable principles that can be applied to particular cases. In fact, this has not been our primary problem... Our problem arises rather from the fact that our research challenges what others want to believe; our problem is in obtaining an audience that will listen when the information is unpalatable (193)..what we have is uncomfortable knowledge, the kind of knowledge that challenges established clichés and puts in question accepted solutions, and so those who champion them".

14. James Leach refs.

15. *Rationales of Ownership* p82

Loren Schwerd

In graduate school I began making wearable objects and garments that incorporated, or suggested, an element of function or performance. These pieces were motivated by the desire to depart from the strictly formal approach to sculpture that had been the focus of my undergraduate training. My attempts at performance were not especially successful, however, they were a necessary step that helped me to appreciate the expertise involved in engaging an audience, and they inspired me to look for performers who could help me to accelerate my learning curve.

In 2002 I collaborated with choreographer and performer, Martha Brim, on several dance pieces that her company debuted at the Columbia Museum of Art, in South Carolina. I had seen her perform a few months prior and I was delighted by how humor seemed to be inherent in her work. I imagined that she might have fun with the awkwardness and absurdity that was often present in my work at that time.

Martha had already identified some themes for the performance, such as breath, power, and voice. I used those themes to design the wearable objects and garments that Martha then used as the basis for her choreography. I was excited by the unexpected things that happened when Martha engaged the objects. She never responded the way I imagined she would and her visceral response were like a wordless critique that introduced possibilities that had not occurred to me.

I was thrilled by Martha's interpretation of my work, I learned a lot, and the performances were well received, however, the process was very difficult for me and I nearly quit in moments of panic and frustration. I was just beginning my career in academia, and struggling to stay engaged with my work, while balancing a heavy teaching load. I am a planner and a worrier, with a tendency to become overwhelmingly self-critical. I was under confident and instead of communicating my concerns to Martha, I wasted a lot of time and energy trying to cover it up.

Martha possess a more laid back nature and she is much more comfortable leaving things open ended. She had already established a career as a Professor at Columbia College, and as the Director of the Power Company. I think the struggle for her was in learning to trust that the limitations presented by my works would introduce interesting, alternative directions.

This project demonstrated the necessity to recognize my strengths and limitations, to identify and construct effective working conditions for myself, and to communicate these needs to my collaborators. These lessons

sound rudimentary, however, they require a level of experience and self-awareness that I did not possess at that time.

I embarked on this project expecting to learn ways to communicate through gesture. I didn't anticipate what dance could teach me about the elements of three-dimensional design. I understood those relationships in static, visual terms, but watching Martha's choreography develop, I gained a far more comprehensive understanding of the principles of design, and the interdisciplinary language we apply to them. My three dimensional design and sculpture students think I am a bit wacky but now when I am trying to explain how compositional elements work, such as implied line, tension, or negative space, I don't reach for a pencil. I strike a pose.

Martha, on the other hand, had never devoted much attention to the documentation of her performances, considering it a chore that was necessary for the promotion of the company. But watching how deliberately I approached the documentation of our project led Martha to consider new possibilities for the presentation of her work. She took charge of the shooting and editing of her performances. Eventually, video became a creative tool for Martha, who introduced video projections into some of her performances.

In the summer of 2008, Martha and I were invited to the Penland School of Crafts to teach a workshop that combined our interests in wearable art and movement. We titled the workshop Body Extension. Our idea was for the participants to create objects or garments designed to be engaged in a performance. I had always wanted to obtain more experience with movement, to inform my designs, but I had little time in the academic year for taking a dance class. Martha loved to incorporate visual art into her choreography, but she felt limited by her knowledge of process and materials. We joked that we were designing the class we wanted to take, but at the time I didn't understand that this was in fact the key to the success of the class. I believe that our desire and our willingness to participate as both teachers and students helped to construct an atmosphere that facilitated risk-taking.

By this time I had a few more years of making and teaching art under my belt. I had learned to accept

that I needed a good deal of planning and preparation to feel confident in my role. I constructed a daily schedule of potential objectives and activities, and I presented it to Martha. She had not thought about the course in such detail, but my tentative schedule gave her something to respond to and together we developed a daily plan that we were both happy with. I assured her that we could change the plan. I just needed to know I had a plan to fall back on. In our previous project, I had been afraid to impose, what I perceived as my neurosis, on Martha, but she was happy to have the schedule. For the first time it occurred to me that perhaps that kind of organization wasn't Martha's strength. I hid my need for organization instead of recognizing it as a strength that I could brought to the project. The second time around, I discovered that Martha's spontaneity and my preparation were a good balance for each other.

I led a portion of the class, introducing images and video clips of visual artists and performers who engage objects and helping the students to design and construct components. Martha led exercises in movement and helped the students to develop a vocabulary of motion that expressed their ideas. The class culminated with a series of performances that were sited all over the grounds of the school. The workshop was a two-week, whirlwind experience. The group consisted of twelve extraordinary women artists who ranged in age from nineteen to sixty-seven. They demonstrated a wide range of experience, but were evenly matched in their enthusiasm and talent. Within the group there were several students working toward undergraduate or graduate degrees in fiber art or sculpture, but had little experience with performance. There were also several self-taught visual artists with a good deal of dance training. All of the participants were generous with their knowledge and encouraging of each other's ideas,

Their playful energy was visible in our workspace where impromptu costuming and almost continuous contact improv became normal.

Workshops at the Penland School of Crafts are generally focused on materials and techniques, and some of the students in other workshops were visibly skeptical of our activities, but the women in our class seemed to be emboldened by their disapproval.

The activities I introduced were influenced by from a variety of artists, such as, Augusto Boals's Games for Actor and Non Actors, site interventions by Richard Long, gestures by Merle Ukeles. Janine Antoni, prosthetics activated by Rebecca Horn and Lisa Bufano, and puppets by Julie Taymor. They were given short assignments to use their body as a marking or forming tool, to extend or alter their contour, and to create

a prosthetic with a unique function. Martha's exercises had us deconstructing simple gestures, running in slow motion, investigating space with our bodies, and discovering alternate rhythms of movement.

When participating in Martha's motion exercises, I had no idea what I was doing. I was in awe of the dancers who moved so naturally, and I think my awkwardness gave other students permission to suspend their own self-judgment and explore. I did not have to measure them against each other in the form of a grade, so the hierarchies of the regular classroom were eliminated and everyone had special knowledge and experience to contribute. I was gratified by the confidence they displayed when we performed our works for the rest of the school on the final day of the session.

In my sculpture classes, I often use wearable art, prosthetic objects, and portable spaces to introduce considerations of time, site and interaction to students who are suspicious of conceptual art. When the evaluation criterion shifts from "what it looks like" to "what it does", students have to look for new models and develop new skills to communicate their ideas.

I employ collaborative exercises in my classes to demonstrate that teaming up with other artists, or partners informed by other disciplines, can be an effective way to invite challenges and opportunities for continuing their education, and sustaining a critical practice, after graduation.

Introduction

In 2009, in response to a growing need as we saw it, The Making, a crafts development agency based in Hampshire, launched a new action research and education programme to bring craft and design directly into British schools.

Skills in the Making, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is designed to improve the level of craft and design knowledge amongst school teachers. It is a three-year professional development programme which enables art, design and craft teachers and trainees to meet some of the UK's leading makers, find out about their work and explore the value of learning through making. This knowledge we hope, will in turn be passed on to their pupils and will help improve the standards of craft and design education in British schools. Artists involved in the programme to date, include highly respected figures such as metalwork artist Junko Mori, ceramist Kate Malone and Jerwood Prize winners Caroline Broadhead and Phil Eglin.

The programme is being developed in a unique collaboration with Oxford Brookes University, an important example of third sector innovation delivering new solutions for education, teacher training and pedagogy. The collaboration is producing new models of best practice, using the intellectual assets of the artists, designers and makers involved. Our masterclasses in contemporary crafts practice have explored new approaches to visual research. PGCE trainees are using critical analysis and visual data collection methods to investigate the experience. This data is subsequently being analysed in relation to social constructivist learning theories to explore how active learning processes develop through making with an expert.

Skills in the Making also provides a timely and lively response to Ofsted's latest survey, *Drawing Together: Art, Craft and Design in Schools*, which found that craft and design were poorly taught or neglected in many schools: '...in more than half the schools visited, craft and design dimensions were underdeveloped, topics were unimaginative and there was a lack of response to pupils' cultural interests.' (OFSTED 2009: p 6). We believe this failure has a knock-on effect, resulting in fewer young people seeking careers in these subjects, the closure of specialist craft departments in higher education and, potentially, the decline in quality contemporary craft and design in the UK. The report noted that the underlying problem was often due to insufficiently trained teachers and called for continuing professional development for art teachers at all levels.

Skills in the Making is designed to improve the offer to teachers with inspirational opportunities to further their knowledge through direct contact with leading artists. It will also act as a catalyst for establishing the report's aim of 'developing sustained partnerships between schools, the creative industries, galleries and artists in the locality.' (OFSTED 2009: p 7).

Value of working with craft practitioners and makers

Our philosophy is one of using non-didactic techniques such as active dialogue, interpretation, observation and hands-on participation; learning is viewed as a self-reflexive process where knowledge is discovered, not simply imparted. We take a constructivist approach (Hein 1992), which means not viewing learners as empty bottles to be filled, but as creative individuals who bring their own experiences, interests and skills to a session, whatever their age. 'Participation' then becomes a collaborative process between the artist/practitioner/workshop leader and the assembled group.

For teachers the unique perceived benefit of Skills in The Making is that it provides contact with professionals; practicing artists, designers and makers. These individuals are not teachers but importantly, self-employed freelancers, working in real world and what they can bring to the classroom is different but complimentary.

Makers can act as vocational role models with diverse backgrounds. For example Junko Mori trained as a welder in Japan before studying art in the UK. They bring original approaches, seen here in Junko's use of open-ended drawings (modular doodles of repeated patterns growing organically that develop themes of propagation and growth) and drawing in three-dimensions with wire & metal. These approaches can be used in an accessible way at any Key Stage and can lead to more experimental sketchbook work.

Craft practitioners can offer alternative career paths and have direct experience of routes into creative industries e.g. fashion, retail, one-off bespoke textile design. They have often built their career on skill and being flexible, creating opportunities for themselves by responding to clients, commissions, residencies, exhibitions etc. (portfolio working). Another important consideration is their ability to advise pupils on options or progression to FE & HE which can provide a substitute for often poor careers advice in schools (especially in arts subjects).

We are emphasizing the importance of engaging with contemporary craft practice by highlighting issue-based work that is non-functional. Lucy Brown explores self-identity through garments that have personal meaning. The recycling or deconstruction of old clothes that have social or cultural significance is a key part of Lucy's work and this translates very easily into an accessible classroom activity using old wooden picture frames as cheap DIY weaving looms. There is great potential here for link with curriculum themes including self-portraits and cultural understanding.

Skills in The Making promotes cross-curricular applications working with crafts practitioners like Rob Kessler, a maker forging inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary partnerships. Kessler (Professor of Ceramics at Central St. Martins) has been collaborating with botanists at Kew to make pieces in glass, textiles & ceramics using visual imagery from nature: pollen & seeds (manipulated & coloured in Photoshop).

Through our work together we were able to explore the creative use of technology and ICT in art using microscopes, digital cameras & sketchbooks (old & new technology). Art and Design PGCE trainees from Oxford Brookes University worked in partnership with staff from School of Life Sciences at Oxford Brookes and this innovative approach encouraged the joint use of equipment and the pooling of resources across departments, including science labs, microscopes, computers, cameras etc.

"I liked hearing about the development of the artist's interests- the lack of boundaries between things."

Participant in Rob Kessler workshop

This approach also links directly to the QCA recommendation in the National Curriculum that students should be 'thinking & acting like artists, craftspeople and designers, working creatively and intelligently...'

Contact with practitioners can provide much needed currency for teachers and tie-ins with current events/exhibitions. Makers can provide links with high-profile cultural and commercial events such as London Fashion Week, the Clothes Show, Design Week and particularly in the crafts sector; Origin at Spitalfields Old Market and Collect at the Saatchi Gallery.

Textiles artist Dawn Dupree uses contemporary urban imagery, which appeals to teachers and young people alike and encourages a free painterly approach to screenprinting using open screens, wax resists and mixing coloured dyes in-situ (instead of cutting or preparing complex stencils or exposing screens).

Craft uses experiential learning, haptic approaches, or

learning through touch (Kolb 1984) and many educational psychologists believe touch is crucial to our cognitive development (Dewey 1934). Working on a large scale, ceramicists such as Kate Malone utilise bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (Gardner 1983) coupled with expert understanding of ceramic materials and their capabilities. Interestingly, Kate is used as a case study in the National Curriculum and her work, inspired by natural forms, is a very accessible way to introduce pupils to working in three-dimensions as students can bring natural found objects in to the classroom as source materials and inspiration. Kate is very generous with her time and has volunteers and apprentices in her studio in Barcelona. She also makes every effort to answer email enquiries from students, encouraging individuals to follow in her footsteps.

Caroline Broadhead's work has developed from jewellery to body adornment and she now makes sculptural clothing for installations, performances and collaborations with contemporary dancers. Working with Caroline encouraged the trainees in their tactile skills, spatial awareness and structural understanding. These skills only really come through material knowledge gained through 'hands-on' making, something Peter Dormer refers to as 'tacit knowledge' (Dormer 1994), even using low cost materials such as paper & card. Most importantly, craft offers creative thinking through making. Just as dance could be described as thinking through movement, craft can be described as thinking through making (Adamson 2007).

Working with contemporary craft develops teachers' critical language and builds their confidence to engage with conceptual work. Helen Carnac's sessions encouraged critical analysis, discussion and the exploration of meaning with trainees at the Institute of Education. Helen, who is a metalworker by training but also lecturer and curator, developed a discussion-based model around the language of making, the importance of experimental and intuitive work (that is not outcome-led) and appreciating the handmade. This could be seen as a reaction to consumerism and manifests itself in movements like Craftivism in the US, Urban Knitting in the UK and even Helen's own touring exhibition which she recently curated: Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution. As Richard Sennett states in his rather philosophical book *The Craftsman*, 'slow craft time also enables the work of reflection and imagination...' (Sennett 2009).

Helen's artist-facilitated discussion was followed by collaborative group work around a theme with open-ended outcomes. These included a mini group exhibition exploring mark making through a group drawing, by first creating the objects to 'make marks' using a limited 'palette' of found materials, and all produced in space of a couple of hours. This session explored the

three basic abilities that are 'the foundation of craftsmanship' according to Sennett, '...the ability to localize, to question, and to open up' (ibid.).

Research Evidence

The research element was developed in partnership with Rachel Payne from Oxford Brookes University and was situated within socio-cultural theory. It attempted to explore how trainees' learning and professional practice develops when exposed to the practice of a craft expert within a PGCE learning community: How does the trainees' professional practice develop as a result of working with an expert? Are they able to master or appropriate new learning in order to initiate effective craft based learning in the classroom? How does social interaction and the cultural context affect how trainees learn, and what are the implications for this in relation to classroom practice?

But first I want to clarify what is meant by mastering and/or appropriating learning in a socio-cultural context and also to clarify what cultural tools and agent refers to. Mastering means that someone can move beyond mimicry of process and technique to using it independently; appropriation means that the learner personalises this experience and so owns the knowledge/process/technique and so invests differently in the process. Cultural tools refer to everything that is used in the learning process which is human made and helps the learner engage with the learning activity. Agent is the learner, the expert and us and we all have different agencies – or aims and purposes in relation to the activity/research. The relationship between cultural tools and agents is the theory of Mediated Action (Wertsch 2007).

The range and order of workshop activities provided opportunity for discussion and reflection, expert presentation about craft practice, and group and independent making in relation to set themes. This relates to Vygotsky's theory of linguistic development in children where speech becomes the means by which socialisation into a community and cultural forms of thought occur (Vygotsky 1978).

Communication was multimodal as trainees were asked to use cameras to capture still and moving images of the making processes; using these tools the trainees documented both explicit and implicit mediation (Wertsch 2007). This data was used to explore the trainees' process of learning; film footage was played back to the trainees after the workshop when they were asked to consider: How has working with a craft based practitioner changed your professional practice? This was broken into 3 sub-questions focusing on identifying key moments when learning changed

direction, how collaboration contributed to learning and how key learning points from the workshop translate into classroom pedagogy.

Transformations are indicated by how learners choose to engage with a situation according to their perceptions and personal histories, as well as how they engage with each other and the expert. In this sense, learning occurs when the trainee gradually becomes aware of the meaning and function of cultural tools and how to apply them in a different learning context.

Discussion and interview transcripts revealed the process of mastering a tool starts socially through the interaction of expert and learners... Expert intervention implies tensions as well as benefits: the intervention attempts to alter the learner's actions which limits personal interpretation, however this approach enables the learner to develop an initial understanding of how to manipulate the cultural tool in order to create an artefact; it provides a starting point.

Initially, trainees can mimic the expert's actions but cannot demonstrate competence. Problem solving and adaptation were supported according to the trainees' history of making and their approaches to learning. Another key moment of learning evident was the importance of play and experimentation to foster risk taking...over 50% of trainees cited playing with new materials as key in developing mastery and how the ability to engage in risk taking activity appeared to link to confidence and freedom from the fear of failure. When analysing the social aspect of making it became clear that some trainees experienced insecurities when making together, engaging in informal comparisons with their peers.

However, not all trainees experienced negative social comparisons and some cited how important it was to make alongside others; some trainees referred to insecurities whilst others referred to the value of comparing different working methods to reveal diverse and/or new processes of engaging with cultural tools. In addition, the experience of being challenged... was viewed as important...through set projects exploring a specific theme for example. Feedback revealed certain trainees experienced a moment of transformation owing to restrictions placed on them by the expert. Focus group responses indicate how trainees adapted diverse components of the workshop to embed into pedagogical planning; these varied depending on aspects which promoted interest, transformations or correlated with personal context.

"For me it was the importance of experimentation and play, and if it's a new material allowing pupils time to interact with it and take risks, and, you know, have a go rather than expecting them to produce something straight away. I thought that was vital. "

PGCE Trainee

This research indicates key findings which correlate to the properties of mediated action (Wertsch 1998). For example, the process of mastery begins socially through mimicry... the importance of risk taking and play in a secure environment; that social visual activity can promote insecurity and as well as new investigations... the importance of emotional support from peers and the expert; the role the visual plays when problem solving, and the relevance of informal learning such as sharing and extending ideas through informal dialogue.

Returning to the research question it is clear the trainees learnt and developed professional practice through expert facilitation of activity with cultural tools, evident through multiple moments of transformation. One conclusion is that possibly the most effective teachers are those who are able to appropriate cultural tools and embed this ownership within pedagogy and curriculum design authentically.

Conclusions

Quality Assurance

In the last six months The Making and its host HE partners have been observed and received positive feedback from OFSTED (Ian Middleton HMI) and undergone quality assurance by the Centre for the use of Research & Evidence in Education (CUREE) on behalf of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA),

"...the trainees gained a great deal at a very impressive stage of their career. Your choice of maker and the focus of the workshop were skillfully combined... extremely positive and productive."

Ian Middleton HMI (OFSTED)

The TDA has highlighted four areas which are important for the overall quality of teachers' professional development and frequently underdeveloped in provision and/or in school use of CPD: sustaining collaborative approaches, encouraging reflection to inform judgments, helping improve outcomes for children and young people, based on effective needs analysis.

The Making's provision was evaluated favourably against this code of practice and this will inform the code of practice for Skills in The Making going forward. CPD providers do not need to be licensed and so these endorsements are an important mark of quality for The Making.

The Future

The Making is now researching potential HE partners for the final phase (year three) of the Paul Hamlyn funded programme during the 2011-12 academic year. These may include Winchester, Middlesex and the University of Northumbria in Newcastle.

Further developments have been made in partnership with the University of London's Institute of Education, the Universities of Greenwich, Roehampton and Liverpool John Moores in order to provide an in-depth model for delivery that can be replicated by other initial teacher training courses throughout the country.

This model and these regional partners will help to inform the business plan we are currently drafting to ensure long term viability of the programme.

However, the wider context for this plan is massive change within initial teacher training (ITT) provision by universities and there is a huge state of flux within the HE sector. The Department for Education (DfE) has also announced a National Curriculum Review on whether art and design and design/technology should remain national curriculum subjects. As a result, any plans will have to be reviewed as soon as changes are announced.

However, despite all the uncertainty, our long term aim is that new communities of practice are being developed to meet the 'design challenges' for pedagogy and the crafts.

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Project Overview

This slide-illustrated presentation will focus on a unique project that took place in India during the summer of 2010. It will address three of the key words used in the title of this conference:

“Conversations”

- What was being discussed?
- Who was talking and who was listening?
- Were all voices equal?
- What sparked the conversations?
- What languages were used?
- Is the conversation over or is it ongoing?

“Collaborations”

- Who was involved?
- What types of collaborations were happening?

“Materials”

- What does this word mean in relation to this project? What materials were used?
- Why were these particular materials chosen?

India is a country that has an age-old, amazing and rich material culture. The diversity of its cultural artifacts is breath-taking. However, as India experiences significant paradigm shifts in its social structure, the cultural traditions and resulting artifacts of its diverse societies have been impacted. There is a duality to this phenomena, as it involves both change and continuity. In some ways there is a timelessness, a continuity to India and its rich cultural heritage. However, it is also in a constant state of flux, of change, with internal and external pressures impacting its material culture. This multi-faceted six month project primarily focused on one aspect of the material culture in Savarkundla, India. The focus was on the textile traditions of this region.

Background

Savarkundla is a community located in the northwest Indian state of Gujarat. Savarkundla is located in what is known as the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. This geographic region has a rich tradition of hand-crafted textiles, including embroidery, beadwork and appliqué. These hand skills were informally passed from one generation of women to the next and items made were typically done for self-adornment and domestic use. Over time, these traditions have been eroding, as ap-

preciation for the exquisite hand-crafted textile pieces decline, cheap mass produced alternatives become more readily available and as paradigm shifts in the traditional social structure occur.

The Savarkundla Embroidery Cluster Development Project was implemented and managed by the International Center for Indian Crafts (ICIC) of the National Institution of Design (NID) located in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India, and was funded by the Gujarat State Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation, Ltd. (GSHHDCL) Government of India. NID is one of the foremost trans-disciplinary and internationally recognized institutions in the field of design education, research and training. NID has played a key role as catalyst in the development and promotion of design in the Indian handicrafts industry. The Savarkundla Cluster was selected, in part, due to the support of Darshan Handicrafts, a local non-government organization (NGO) and their willingness to offer necessary technical and infrastructural assistance towards realizing the proposed project.

Cluster Development Model

The project was developed using a well-established model of cluster development. That model served as the basis, but it was expanded to include some unique features. In a typical cluster development project, supported by the Government of India and the state government of Gujarat, the designer provides product ideas and patterns, shows the production process and supplies the materials, while the participant artisans make the products. But this project was unique in that in addition to technical skill up-gradation, this particular project encouraged the participating student artisans to think independently, develop business acumen and generate new product ideas and designs.

Participants

This project began as a series of conversations among concerned individuals and expanded to include various stakeholders, including government agencies, academic professionals, educational institutions, local artisans and other interested individuals. The success of this project stemmed from the highly interactive

collaboration which took place between the artisan cluster, the design team and the sponsoring body throughout each stage of the project. It was a dynamic and collaborative endeavor, where ideas were allowed to flow freely, multiple voices were encouraged to join the “choir”, so to speak, and problem-solving conversations were dynamic, collaborative and effective.

The Setting

The actual Savarkundla workshop consisted of two rooms with a covered porch area that was part of a small two house compound. This served as the central meeting/working space for the teachers and students. In addition to this onsite location, the student artisans worked from home at various stages throughout the project. On those frequent days when students worked on-site, under the direct supervision of the teachers, class began at 9am and ended at 6pm with a two hour lunch break. These days were long for the women because their day started early in the morning and ended late at night as their domestic chores needed to be completed before and after class-time. In spite of the demanding schedule, the women remained cheerful and energetic. There was a lot of chatter, laughter, gossip, teasing, collaborative singing, as well as the important informal and formal design critiquing that went on throughout the sessions.

Methodology

1) A series of in-depth conversations, interviews and on-site work, resulted in a thorough “Needs Assessment Survey”. Participants included government administrators, educators, the women artisans and other stakeholders. This process helped to identify weaknesses and areas of need relative to the current situation. Some of the problems identified included:

- a. no distinct Savarkundla design “identity” / aesthetic in their current product range
- b. lack of diversified product range (current work was mundane, monotonous, lacking innovation)
- c. lack of good craftsmanship / finishing techniques
- d. poor design sensibility / lacking aesthetic appeal
- e. limited access / availability of materials needed for the textile crafts
- f. lacking basic computer literacy
- g. little knowledge of current market trends and customer preferences
- h. artisans abandoning the craft in search of alternative means of earning livelihood

2) Once the “Needs Assessment” was complete, a “Strategic Response” was developed. Some of the strategies implemented include:

- a. hire designers to teach technical and design skills
- b. improve value addition through product diversification (develop contemporary, unique products)
- c. teach and implement quality control measures
- d. provide training on sewing machines
- e. introduce computers as a design and marketing tool
- f. provide managerial and marketing support
- g. strengthen teamwork and collaborative spirit
- h. develop entrepreneurial skills
- i. develop a teaching model that centers on students becoming teachers / mentors, passing on their newly developed skill set to new students, thus sustaining the teaching and learning cycle
- j. provide critical market exposure opportunities for the artisans (onsite visits in the city of

Ahmedabad included the NID campus facilities; shops such as Fab India and Gujarai emporia, so that they could see the diversified range of products and the high level of design and finishing; NGO workshops such as Gramshree and Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) for a behind-the-scenes look at how these co-operative endeavors work; and lastly, the Calico and Shreyas Museums to see the range of exquisite textiles and artifacts on display, tangible objects embedded with cultural significance

3). At the conclusion of the project, an insightful “Qualitative Assessment” was completed, examining not only the outcomes achieved, but also examining the potential for sustainable growth.

- a. participants gained awareness and appreciation for their traditional embroideries and other textile articles
- b. participants developed the ability to conceive new product types unique to Savarkundla
- c. participants realized importance of technical expertise and finishing for both the regional and international marketplace
- d. participants were amazed to see such high prices for finished products in Ahmedabad shops and were excited about the income potential for their work
- e. participants now have the skill-set and ability to train others
- f. participants are keen to set up a co-operative society and to become entrepreneurs
- g. participants became sources of inspiration to other women in the community

Sustainability Issues

Significant emphasis focused on re-using waste fabric swatches as part of a sustainable approach. Initially, using old fabric as a distinct material component of

a product was not appreciated by the artisans who had no understanding of its contextual and marketing value. These artisans live in a traditional community where they have little to no access to contemporary trends in design. They were unaware of the global trend towards reusing, recycling, and up-cycling materials, an approach that has significant implications and benefits. Being “green” is definitely the “in” thing. It is good for the planet, for humankind and is a smart design choice, as these women learned.

A second sustainability concern focused on the long-term success and viability of the Savarkundla Embroidery Cluster Development Project. One of the key ways that this was addressed was in the teaching and learning model used. A lead designer and a design assistant were brought in. They in turn mentored two students who then became “Master Craftswomen”. These two women then became responsible for many of the day-to-day administrative duties and mentoring of other students. A key decision was made after conversations were held regarding the structure and timeline for the 6 month project. The Savarkundla women who signed up to participate in the project were split into two groups with staggered starting dates. One group started the training a few weeks before the second group began. This allowed the senior group to become “teachers” to the junior group. The expectation is that the junior group will go on to teach others, and the cycle continues, and thus, is sustained. Everyone is engaged, invested and have equal opportunities to mentor others.

Outcomes

The final outcomes to date have far exceeded initial expectations and goals. The outstanding success of the six month project led the participants to endorse the many benefits of collaborative practices in the disciplines of education, art, craft, design and marketing, both locally and globally.

Under the “Design Development and Product Diversification” initiative, a new range of innovative products were developed with the help of an experienced designer, with specific products targeting both domestic and international markets. Some of the products created were:

- 1) Visually engaging, handcrafted cloth educational book with embroidered and appliquéd alphabets and numbers using both Gujarati and English
- 2) Colorful hanging mobiles for children shaped like letters of the alphabet and numbers
- 3) Appliquéd and embroidered photo frames
- 4) Unique, one-of-a-kind creative expressive art cloths
- 5) Stunning torans (door frame hangings) and chaklas (wall hangings) based on traditional forms but updated

with unique color combinations

6) Stylish office file covers

7) Functional and well-designed domestic ware such as dining table placemats and cushion covers

It is anticipated that the new and diversified products developed during the Savarkundla cluster will be in high demand in emerging markets within India and abroad.

Remember those three key words in the conference title?

The Conversations happened mostly in Gujarati and on occasion, in English. Each and every stakeholder was encouraged to join in the Conversations which were often lively, intense and sometimes even humorous.

The Savarkundla project was truly about Collaborations in the best sense of the word. Each and every individual played an important role and their contributions were vital to the overall success of the collaboration.

The project participants studied the historic and stunning material culture of Gujarat state, focusing on the geographic region of Saurashtra. The materials used to create new textile products ranged from recycled / re-purposed fabric, to materials purchased during an exposure trip to Ahmedabad. The artisans worked their design magic to transform these materials into unique and innovative products that are distinctly recognizable as being from Savarkundla.

Conclusion

Collaborative endeavors between and among institutions and individual stakeholders always present unique sets of challenges and rewards. The authors aspire to be continually engaged in the process of defining and redefining the living craft practices in India. They are committed to promoting and elevating those traditions in contemporary and relevant directions.

In addition to the tangible outcomes, this experience has also had a profound, intangible affect on all who participated. It was rewarding to work on a truly collaborative project with so many unique, talented and interesting individuals who were all deeply invested in the outcome. The outcome that is being acknowledged here is one of human emotion, of connection, of relationships that were allowed to unfold and grow based on mutual respect, by engaging in meaningful conversations, and by collaborating on each aspect of the project. The level of trust, good will and affirmation was remarkable. Throughout the project, participants maintained a remarkable level of enthusiasm, engaged in collaborative problem-solving and persevered

through challenges which ranged from disappearing scissors to adhering to governmental agency guidelines.

The women artisans have developed a deep sense of accomplishment and pride. They understand that they are empowered to contribute to the financial well-being of their families. This collaborative endeavor has resulted in a deeper sense of investment by the artisans in the community of Savarkundla and in strong friendships among the artisans.

The authors have a keen interest in taking further what was learned and achieved during the Savarkundla project and creating a global platform where students, designers, educators, artists, and government entities come together for the purpose of sharing skills and knowledge and working towards common goals. The conversation will continue and we invite you to be a part of it.

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This paper will discuss the way the three of us, David Gates, Alice Kettle and Jane Webb, went about working together. We aim to discuss this process in order to explore the mechanisms of collaboration. We all had (unknown to each other at the time) a desire to collaborate in a deep way, rather than a superficial subcontracting of skills. As with all our work, this paper is in itself a collaboration and we have used it as an opportunity for reflexive action on the project, finding over the last year and a half, meeting up both important and geographically problematic. On writing this paper the remembering of sequence, cause or happening has provided a working analogy with the travelling done.

We will present this paper as 3 strands of one voice. Alice will present the remembered past, I will read a present-now in the form of a conceptual framework, and Jane will tell the present-then through our email correspondence.

I do feel I am emerging into a new space. It makes me feel I want other things, more books, more fun! Just enjoying life and not doing what I should do! I feel as though there is so much to learn.

We met for the first time as a group of three at MMU at the event when the pairings were announced. Until then, Jane had been assigned the role of critical writer for the Pairings, but during the day repositioned herself as a participant. Alice had invited David to join her in collaboration since his research seemed to have a thematic link through, making, communication, and interaction - the discourse revealed through process and association. This was the first time Alice and David had come together in the context of Pairings, so we might say that Jane joined them at the project's inception, we were always three. During the presentations Jane and David recognised in each other an affinity in their interest in the role of discourse.

A triangle of practices seems to carry so much potential, especially using the looseness of conversation as the starting point. With 3 possible pairs in dialogue, there are also 3 'L' shapes, with each of us in turn at the angle or turning point of the 'L'. We might all meet anywhere in the area of the triangle. It's a horribly mechanistic image I know, one that reminds me of the diagrams and models in books on how to be a designer. No-one really works likes this, and I don't want to, but it does serve as a useful thought to perhaps forget quite quickly in such a rigid format.

The first meeting really took place outside on the grass in All Saints Square, MMU - an ideal place being a transitory space that allows for pausing, resting and changes of direction. The early conversation centred on the role of text in recording and disseminating crafts practice, and the relational aspect of crafts history & theory and the difference of 'doing' craft. Because of this connection, Alice reviewed her position as outside an emerging partnership of textual discourse and suggested that she should leave a pairing to Jane and David, but they convinced her not to.

Here are some suggestions of what we could do, all of which can be ignored.

Go for a walk.

Go and look at something with art in it.

Talk about a piece of writing.

Play with Alice's sewing machines.

On the train back to London, David wrote notes and looking at them since, they show a relational plotting, David finding himself somewhere between Jane and Alice and thus pegging-out an immediate topography of identities and practices. At the time Alice and Jane were quite unaware of David finding this place, 'between'.

For myself I am very happy to be sitting between and alongside a site of practice and a site of theory, the opportunity to work with the ideas of materials and the ideas of words, and the crossing points between them.

We met again in the British Library and the British Museum. At the British Library, we sat in the café and discussed our families, our family histories and lives. Interestingly looking back to these conversations, none of us foregrounded our identities as makers. It was through the channels of family history that our connections to materiality, the 'stuffness' of our worlds surfaced. We all feel that our epistemologies and identities as individuals coming together were not made from the materially and disciplinary singular categories of institutions but rather from the more general, everyday immersion of encountering materials, of being in a made world and of the acts of doing.

The shift from a 'pairing' to a grouping of three has some precedent as noted by Anna Grimshaw, Elspeth Owen and Amanda Ravetz (2010) who highlight the work of Paul Ryan in defining a 'three person solution' or a 'threeing'. They note that rather than "reifying established positions" that can often happen with a

collaborative pairing, three "...results in a dislodging of categories that can otherwise seem self-evident and allows for identities to be constituted in and through the collaborative process itself" (Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz in Schneider and Wright 2010: 148). In a study of theatre and its relationship to cultural models of social engagement, Kirsten Hastrup (2004) identifies that for communication to occur between individuals, the model of the Shakespearean actor and their audience is crucial in that for any two actors, the audience formed a 'third point'. The 'third point' is not that of a passive 'eavesdropper', but is that of an equal participant (Hastrup 2004: 225). However, this position is a 'third point', one that is not the same as the other two and forms a position of reflection, a mediatory role, an observer, a commentator, a practitioner, or even a devil's advocate.

Umm, I like the circular movement this it is forming...

I'm liking the idea of implied movement and demountability/re-makability .

And flip books with something hidden in each layer... There is something very poetic about all these materials...but I need more drawings and text from you...

I am hanging onto this idea of the cave, with a hidden interior

But I'm now getting carried away...

(2) A pivotal meeting at the Birmingham City Museum followed some months later. As a location, it was a geographical centre point to which we all converged. This centrality of place was combined with another neutral transitional space, another café with people coming and going and surrounded by objects and exhibits which permeated a sense of reflective art and design practice. This was a coming together in an environment of equality.

I agree that we really do seem to bounce off each other (okay now I've got an image of us in big inflatable suits on a bouncy castle, but you know what I mean). Do we think it is a totally unrealistic idea that we could work together for at least say 4 days? I mean, we'd have to be somewhere that had all, or at least some of the equipment we each use, so we could all contribute to the making but... what do you think? Somewhere...

According to Donald Winnicott, when many theorists discuss the term 'between', they "maintain a Euclidean logic, by posing it as the third term between two primary terms" (Metcalf & Game 2008: 18).

For Winnicott, this reliance on Euclid does not communicate the different type of space that is made in moments of 'creativity'. Euclid's geometry is based on a loss of embodied experience, a plunging of three-dimensionality and temporality into two dimensions. The phenomenological attitude to this is to see the "... the geometer..." as one who "...will not think of exploring, besides geometrical shapes, geometrical thinking" (Patterson 2007: 61). But this opposition of embodied experience, being-in-the-body-in-the-world, does not quite articulate the formlessness of just being. It is a state of 'un-integration' that does not differentiate between states of outer space and inner personal space but combines the two into what Winnicott states is 'potential space' (Metcalf & Game 2008: 18). 'The sense of social community and of shared (or, indeed, disparate) interests pervades the vision of the field of possible action. The field is always already populated, the sense of self is partly mediated through the eyes of others, and the world is profoundly "dialogic" in that sense (Bakhtin, 1981) (Hastrup 2004 :235)"

I am keen to experience notions of speed and risk. Some of the work that I have been making over the last year or so has been partly motivated by trying to embrace chance and to allow the freedom and vitality of those first sketch phases of an idea to come right through to the final piece, building structure through line, the construction of a textile, it is three-dimensional (albeit compressed) not a surface.

Our objective was to consolidate our understanding and initiate a strategy for the project by questioning and comparing working methods. Our shared motifs and concerns began to emerge as a list of words describing space. They formed a manifesto of fundamental starting points, places where making could be examined and which could provide a portable tool kit carried away to geographically different locations. These words provided the component parts and material that could be circumnavigated and investigated.

They were:

Behind, Text as piercing, Holes, Surface, Volume, Planes, Penetrating , Shadow, Light, Interior, Exterior, Back , Front, Perspective

David likes corners... Jane is making words intangible and Alice is looking for line.

Am interested that although embroidery might be seen as a surface or layering technique, it cannot avoid having a back and front through its construction, and while not as constructed perhaps as some weaves, there is an undeniable 3-dimensionality to these eyes and hands. The accidental

or secondary on the reverse leaving clues to the building of the front.

'Potential space' does not necessarily mean a conflation of differences between the body and space, the inner and the outer, but a constant state of tension in difference. In his article "A Typology of Thresholds", Georges Teyssot discusses the range of meanings inherent in the etymology of the word 'between'. He notes that "[t]he English "between"...contains the word "twain", thus conferring the idea of the "two". The "between" is a mark of the spacing inherent to difference, one that is both "separateness and towardness" (Teyssot 2005: 105). Like the Shakespearean role of the audience as 'third point', the between position holds the potential space perpetually open. As Adam Metcalfe and Ann Game (2008) thus note, 'potential space' "...is holding space because it can hold possibilities, without seeking to resolve the space through definition" (Metcalfe & Game 2008: 19).

I have to start where I am and I think my response is to use stitch in response to you. David is essentially into 3 dimensions on hard material, and Jane is the metaphor and implicit reference.

I am going to respond to and interpret your imagery and to carry your voices within my material.

I don't know what I am going to make yet but I like being in that place for the moment.

(3) Unfortunately at this point Jane left due to the unexpected death of her father. She explained that she could not continue with the project but David and Alice would not let her leave permanently.

At this time, Alice and David worked together during various visits to each other's workshops bringing form to the words that had been discussed, literally making them material. The words created a thematic framework that gave them licence to primarily explore ideas rather than demonstrating skills. These physical processes in turn fed back and informed in a cycle of making, thought, word, making, thought, word. During this playful practice, Alice and David imagined what Jane might have done with her words if she had been there.

The holding space created by Gates, Kettle and Webb, as interpreted via Metcalfe and Game, can be understood in relation to improvisation as discussed by Elvin Jones, John Coltrane's drummer. Jones says that "[t]here's no such thing as freedom without some kind of control... Coltrane did a lot of experimenting in that direction...even though it gave an impression of freedom, it was basically a well thought out and highly disciplined piece of work" (Patterson 2007: 251).

Improvisation is not completely free, but is an action that moves around agreed structures and understandings between members, but also emerges from and through established practices and traditions. The practice undertaken by Gates and Kettle echoed this same pattern, based on structured knowledge of skill acquired over time, but circulating within the taut, tensile area of the shared holding space.

I would like some copies of pages from the little landscape drawing sketchbook to be in the display case. Gifting me that book on day one actually changed/brought in something new to what I do.

Both Alice and David enjoyed change from what can often be a stifling self-reflexivity when working alone in the workshop. They noticed differences in the rhythm of the practice at different locations. They realised that a workshop is usually a very privileged space, a personal territory. Though both felt respect for their location, there was also a delight in being able to explore someone else's workshop and a mystery in understanding the alternative ephemera of another practice. The intimacy of the workshop locations were completely different from the spaces that Alice, David and Jane had previously met in – these had always been neutral and transitional. The workshops were both familiar and unfamiliar – a homely space comfortable to all makers but one that becomes strangely other when centred around an alternative material.

Yes it is there, I can see it. I would like my golden thread to go beyond the surface. The new surface speaks with a voice of its own and yet with familiar undertones. You will be asked to place a wooden line in 3 dimensional space.

The red shot thru lines toward the top. Have a look. A 1/3 of the way down over on the right hand side, an inch from the edge. Is it there? Is this the hole for your golden thread coming back? Can we do something with it? I like it. Going thru, back and front, beyond the surface.

The shift from a transitional space to specific locations 'owned' by Gates and Kettle was an important part of this process. Workshops are inherently suited as physical metaphors of a holding space being, as Hastrup describes theatre "...a new poetics of space, a poetics that makes us experience the possible rather than the already manifest" (Hastrup 2004: 226). The workshop is always full of latent potential and is perhaps the archetype of all spaces. In his discussion of space as capacity and, influenced by Heidegger, Alberto Corsín Jiménez (2003) notes that "the world is not a known place that exists prior to our engagements with it... on the contrary the world happens with us" and through our practices (2003:

141). This anti-essentialist perspective might be seen, after Berger and Luckmann as a 'Social Construction of Reality'; through interaction a new co-practice is discursively constructed. Thus, "it is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated." (Burr 2003). But, for the workshop to emerge as a heightened space of becoming, beyond the usual state of how we live our lives, it had to be rejected as a personal, known territory that already existed, prior to activity. In other words it had to be opened up to time and in so doing to "choices and possibilities... paths [and]... histories" (Jiménez 2003: 142). Both Gates and Kettle dispossessed their usual spaces, tools and skills and allowed them to become again in what Jiménez sees as the "...double constituency of space" that he calls "capacity" (Jiménez 2003: 142). Gates and Kettle understood this as making work not as separate makers collaboratively, but through divesting their separateness and by working within the between 'potential' space.

We are all busy, getting 3 together is hard!

I am happy for you to go ahead, as I can prepare things for you to do things with. I think we really need to work out what stays in and becomes more and different, and what we shall take out? I quite like the idea of everything going together as one installation or composite 'form'.

(4) The act of unwrapping and curating the work was central to its construction. For Jane, this was her first opportunity to re-join the group, and the unwrapping worked better than any verbal explanation. But this activity was also important for Alice and David. Being 'in' the re-opening, the re/new encounter helped to quickly re-locate everyone. We were in a momentum of energy that felt like the making process itself, it seemed of the moment, not reflecting on what had happened. Orchestrating the component parts meant nothing dominated - it was like a (still ongoing) narrative. Jane was asked by Alice to write on a large piece of stitched wood that Alice herself considered to be a sketchbook. Struggling to think how to write with the construction going on, Jane chose to describe what the building of the pieces suggested to her as the tableaux emerged.

I am very happy that we closed the first loop...as a threesome. Somehow coming back round. It still feels like the beginning though, I have so much to learn from you two!

The initial Pairings exhibition was the first time we had to present something that was a coherent whole and we began to select things and put them in a sequential order like a conversation, objects placed side by side.

This sequential narrative was emphasised by the early idea of each display containing a piece of individual work by individual participants. But in a second crucial curating, these were edited out and the stitched wood and notated sketchbook became the ground for the rest of the objects and we began to build vertically layering and stacking. The work became a treasure of small interventions and three-dimensions, a complex micro-macrocosm, a new space.

Perhaps it is easier for you two to get together as you are already there, I trust you both. I think for the tour the 'Munich' pieces should probably come out...but I was so struck by how well they looked on the embroidered and written board that I would like something there if possible.

This 'threeing' did not follow the model established by Paul Ryan where a successful practice sees three people taking on alternative roles, that of the initiator, respondent and mediator (www.earthscore.com). The triangulation of Gates, Kettle and Webb was more pertinently described by the 'third point' of Shakespearean theatrical practice as outlined by Kirsten Hastrup. The positions of two actors and one audience were constantly rotated through the project, and Gates, Kettle and Webb all took on the role of the 'third point' organically, where two engaged in dialogue that required the third to take on the varied important roles of the between position. As has been noted, the 'between' is crucial for holding open the 'potential space' that Donald Winnicott has identified as central to the space of creativity (Metcalf and Game 2008: 18). As Metcalf and Game suggest, this potential space is a "holding space because it can hold possibilities..." (Metcalf and Game 2008: 19). Holding is a crucial metaphor for this creative triangulation as it denotes not only latent potential, but also the sense of holding things together but apart, allowing for freedom and movement. Crucially holding also infers the handling of tools and materials and of a holding onto one another as part of a collective creative entity. Interestingly the list of words that Gates, Kettle and Webb identified as their manifesto of making, appear as a metaphor for the spatiality of the holding space, of the interiority and vision of the outside.

Let's make a CAKE while we chat...I agree, to do something as a different thing to the academic presentation. Words, Chinese whispers, consequences... our project is still open..... our talk should remain so too....But I WILL NOT re-interpret our experiences through the medium of contemporary dance...

Abstract

Currently there is an increasing awareness of the educational benefits to be derived through a collaborative study relationship across the arts, sciences and humanities. However, at present, curriculum elements suitable for supporting such a transdisciplinary approach have received only sparse attention. This paper explores ways in which such curriculum options and their teaching strategies can be structured so as to derive the greatest benefit from this broader more inclusive approach, especially in postgraduate arts education.

Transgressing disciplinary boundaries.

Despite a decade of funding opportunities for collaborative arts and science outputs from the Wellcome Trust, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, NESTA and others, there is still little by way of work that explores the differential educational experience of early career artists and scientists in order to offer a range of intellectual, creative and methodological tools to undertake such collaborations with confidence and understanding.

Arts students are frequently attracted to science because of the richness of the subject matter, the opportunity to explore fundamental human questions and the evident productivity of its methodology. Science researchers see encounters with the arts and humanities as a way of encouraging public understanding and trust, a tool for creating visually compelling expositions of scientific results and the provision of a different way of thinking about science and the wider intellectual world.

The creativity of both groups derives from an attitude of curiosity, of a desire to understand and explain ourselves and our universe, but this curiosity is often channeled educationally into quite disparate disciplinary traditions – creating a ‘methodology gap’ (Arends, 2003) which can be difficult to overcome. Hopefully we can develop a way of thinking about theory and practice to negotiate the many ‘fault lines’ separating art and science pedagogy.

“Transgressing disciplinary boundaries is a subversive undertaking since it is likely to violate the sanctuaries of accepted ways of perceiving. Among the most fortified boundaries have been those between the natural sciences and the humanities”

Greenberg, 1991, *Transgressive Readings: the texts of Franz Kafka and Max Planck*
The subversive quality of interdisciplinary approaches

referred to by Greenberg has implications not only for researchers and practitioners, but for the way in which educationalists value, recognise and reward student endeavour that exploits the boundaries of diverse subject areas. Perhaps lecturers are fearful of being asked to assess work where some of the reference points come from disciplinary understandings beyond their own expertise? Or perhaps our ‘comfort zone’ of designing discipline-specific module assessment criteria is simply in need of a refreshing expansion? Building bridges between disciplines provides an opportunity to question both the nature of our own pedagogic practices and the potential value of a shared and mutual path of intellectual and creative enquiry. Contemplative spaces which encompass transdisciplinary discourse and discovery are vital in the study of the arts, humanities and sciences if students are to take full advantage of contemporary research cultures and play a full role in social debate and agendas. This is particularly the case at postgraduate level where students experience the accelerating influence of research and debate over direct teaching.

However, in order to think and communicate effectively students need to learn the rudiments of etiquette and language of various disciplines. An active dialogue is needed for learning how to negotiate the space between disciplines, the research methodologies and modes of interpretations of findings that are inflected within different academic discourses and ways of working. What might this mean then for a programme of pedagogy and research training for early-career artist and scientist researcher-practitioners with an interest in bridging the divide? How might educators provide a toolkit and lexicon for mutual discovery and ideas?

Obstacles to transdisciplinary study.

In general, the shift in UK Higher Education towards a national policy of mass education to degree level, dictated increasingly by the short-term demands of commerce and industry and reinforced by the concept of a national set of qualification standards across a range of professions, has fundamentally changed the expectations and experience of academic engagement. Education has largely become a retail transactional market – a market which perceives the relationship merely as between generic providers and consumers. And, to use a commercial terminology, the marketplace becomes competitive both internally and externally to the university.

Internally the competitive environment has led to modularisation of programmes of study, compartmentalising knowledge into a series of tightly-defined and prescribed areas of practice and theory, whilst simultaneously downplaying the importance of understanding. The student 'purchases' the modules of one discipline over another, accumulates the credits awarded for passing the required standard of exposition of what they have learned, and stores them against further learning and future employment prospects. Some readers may recognise an earlier critique of this view of education, that of Paulo Friere and his condemnation of the 'banking system' of education in his work 'The Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (1972)

This internal market creates a climate of considerable sensitivity amongst course leaders in relation to the so-called measurable outcomes of their curriculum design and content. Disciplines which can be readily and easily transformed into this commoditised mode of study and research are more likely to be considered successful in institutional terms than those which have a greater tendency for the promotion of a student's personal curiosity and invention. Disciplinary areas based primarily on the collating of skills, competencies and transaction are perhaps more likely to thrive in this environment than those fields of study requiring more reflection, analysis, observation, creativity and judgement.

It is precisely these qualities of insight, judgement, reason and wisdom that Barnett (1994) argues are amongst the many losses to the HE sector in the supremacy of an educational system based on operational competency.

"...Competence is all or nothing. Either one can hit the nail on the head or one can't. Either one can meet the pre-identified standards or one can't. Understanding, however, is quite a different kind of concept. At any time, a student's understanding of an issue is expressible in an infinite variety of ways, many of which will surprise the student herself. The student will have multiple engagements and be more and less engaged in them all at once."

Barnett, R. 1994, 'The limits of competence: Knowledge, Higher Education and Society' p 107

What Barnett calls for is 'intellectual space' within the curriculum – a space he argues can be both psychological and pedagogical. Students need to feel encouraged to branch out on their own, and the curriculum needs to promote personal risk-taking and independent thought. The contemporary curriculum design formats which discuss learning in terms of 'knowledge and understanding' and 'subject specific and transferrable skills' do so within a narrowing and reductionist definition. If, he argues, we view the no-

tion of transferability in the life-world it would be one of "comparing, contrasting, exchanging, reviewing and experimenting across the manifold domains of one's human projects".

Modularity fragments the student experience substantially, especially when the range of subsidiary subjects available to students is restricted because of timetabling difficulties. Undue concentration on entrepreneurship skills and professional competencies reduces understanding to a collation of immediately merchantisable knowledge. So where is the opportunity for academics and students who are inspired by the intellectual and creative challenge of transdisciplinary activity?

The arguments for inter-disciplinarity.

Several authors have suggested that interdisciplinary research is today a critical step in the evolution of research on complex issues (Rowe 2003; Edwards 2008). Indeed, in many areas of scientific research the myth of the lone scientist in search of 'truth' has long been anachronistic, particularly in the investigations of large scale humanitarian or environmental problems. Likewise, as Barrett (2007) suggests:

"An acknowledgement that the myth of the solitary artist attempting to solve the problems of the world is also obsolete will help to remove major barriers to understanding the philosophical dimension of artistic practice".

Barrett, 2007 'Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry' p7

The increasing opportunities available for funding of research of a transdisciplinary nature can be seen most notably in the recent agreement of the major UK Research Councils on the primacy of 6 main overarching themes: the Digital Economy; Environmental Change; Health and Wellbeing; Energy; Global Uncertainty; Global Food Security. Alongside calls for proposals from academics and others within these cross-council initiatives individual research councils equally now promote interdisciplinary research approaches through new initiatives and emerging themes. (At the time of writing, for example, the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK announced an emerging theme of 'Science in Culture', specifically designed with the aim of encouraging arts and humanities researchers to work in closer collaboration with colleagues in the sciences).

These new forms of research funding arise after a decade or more of education specialists and other academic writers' espousals of the benefits to be accrued by a move towards a more fluid and dynamic approach

to teaching, learning and research activity. Calling in 1997 for 'hybrid forms of knowledge and understanding' Barnett suggested the need for,

"clusterings of inquiry and reflection which are engaged with loosely defined territory of actions and issues in the world which seek to offer a way of corraling a messy area of practice and imparting principle of action."

Barnett, 'The End of Knowledge in Education', 1997, p 172

These clusterings, he suggested, could be considered as 'problem nets' – organised efforts to group a number of activities to identify problems and seek varied solutions that would draw on many disciplinary theories, concepts and practices.

Writing about the founding of 'Le Laboratoire' in 2008, David Edwards made similar assertions regarding the significant contributions to society, industry, science and art that can be made by melding interests through the formation of groups for what he calls 'ideas translation'. Whilst in 1994, Gibbons et al (in their call for 'Mode 2 knowledge production') stressed the value of bringing together clusterings of researchers on a temporary basis, oriented towards problem solving in specific contexts of application.

In his essay 'The arts, Postmodern culture and the Politics of Aesthetic Education', Abbs (1997) proposed 3 key principles of arts education activity:

1. 'Education is existential in nature'

Suggesting the teaching of any discipline must have open structures to create gaps for the 'unknown', for the imagination, for contemplation.

2. 'Education is essentially a collaborative activity'

In that an individual needs a community (the academy?) in which to develop; that learning is an engagement between people and a narrative between individuals engaged in a common pursuit of understanding.

3. 'Education is always a cultural activity which has to be continuously deepened and extended'

Students need to be challenged by other ways of understanding and encouraged to acquire new methods, metaphors and models to test new ideas.

Here Abbs was talking specifically about arts education – nevertheless these fundamental tenets could be equally applied to education in science, and as an argument in favour of a transdisciplinary pedagogy. So what would this mean in practice, and what difficulties would need to be overcome?

Collaborative illusion?

Increasing numbers of conceptual artists work in between the traditional disciplines of science and humanities in the search to create work of novelty and imagination that also engages with major contemporary issues. Vesna (2000) talks of this activity as a 'delicate mission', which does, we would argue, carry with it a number of epistemological traps for the unwary arts practitioner unless such work is informed by a mutual respect and dialogue with the scientific community. One of the problems highlighted by both Vesna (2000) and Schwartz (2009) is the fairly heavy reliance of artistic research on the bibliographical references of the humanities – in particular those of postmodern philosophy.

"Much postmodern writing borders on linguistic play with mathematics and scientific terminology that serves to alienate the scientific community, which has used precise methods to arrive at those theories" Victoria Vesna, 'Towards a Third Culture/Being in Between', 2000, p7

Since artist researcher-practitioners tend to look to the literary and philosophical circles for much of their underpinning discourse, it is all too easy to be strongly influenced by interpretations of the very philosophers who are themselves under attack from the scientific community for what are seen to be serious misreadings and misrepresentation. Whilst postmodernism has undoubtedly been extremely useful in loosening if not dislodging some of the rigid certainties in (say) philosophy of science, a postmodern approach to science itself tends to antagonise most scientists and widens the gap between the 'Two Cultures'. It is perhaps hardly surprising that the overwhelming majority of such cultural commentaries on science are written without the involvement of working scientists, as scientists fluent in postmodernism tend to be in very short supply!

Schwartz (2009) and Punt (2000) also point to a growing erosion in the boundaries between science and the arts, with Punt citing Stephen Jay Gould's assertion that science is not simply a compilation of knowledge, but 'a procedure for knowing the world which uses a system to test and reject hypothesis'. Predictive and imaginal are not mutually exclusive modes of thought, but simply two very different key elements required for continual conceptual reformulation of the world we inhabit – and all research is about challenging conceptual models in one way or another. As such, both science and the arts are intertwined forms of telling useful stories about our world, with art-science projects creating new opportunities for insights from practitioners in both disciplinary areas. However, both authors are keen to warn that

we should not confuse these synergetic activities as 'artists doing science' or, indeed, vice versa. Schwartz reminds us that it should be kept in mind that the results of transdisciplinary research projects tend to be used in completely different ways, with Punt adding that in recognising the new insights offered we should 'not deflect attention from the much more culturally significant interventions that they make'.

Vesna argues however that despite these problems, artists are in a 'semi-favourable' position in relation to the sciences - ideally placed to act as a bridge between scholars in the sciences, cultural studies and philosophy and synthesising something unique and new from their creative work.

It is precisely along these cultural fault lines between traditional science and arts practice and research where we can begin to address aspects of transdisciplinary teaching and learning activities to offer new tools and techniques to the postgraduate student-practitioner-researcher. Within the educational academy science has almost invariably been presented to non-scientists by cultural commentators without a working scientific background. We would argue that it is vital for true transdisciplinary study that experienced scientists with broader educational interests are used as primary sources alongside cultural commentaries to provide effective direct engagement.

'Project Dialogue' art-science seminar series – preparing students for a transdisciplinary approach

Project Dialogue is a transdisciplinary research group within the department of Art and Design at the University of the West of England. Founded in 2005, the primary aim of Project Dialogue is to enquire into the commonalities and differences in the practices and research methodologies across the arts and sciences, with a view to informing future, more flexible, research approaches. A visiting 'Scientist in Residence' regularly engages with departmental research staff to explore new sites of discourse and to stimulate novel projects. Research staff from within Project Dialogue are currently writing and editing chapters for a multi-author book on 'art, science and cultural contention', and also contribute to doctoral research supervision and governance.

Our first symposium, 'Transdisciplinary Landscapes: Dialogues between art and science', attracted arts and science practitioners from across the UK. Since then we have held a wide variety of teaching seminars with postgraduate arts students and invited speakers from across a range of arts and science disciplines. Our primary aim in these seminars has been to offer students a brief opportunity to investigate strategies

by which they might better understand scientific principles, histories and conventions, in order to engage in an arts-science practice with greater creative confidence and insight. Held on a fortnightly basis, on a purely extra-curricula and voluntary basis, the latest series of seminars in 2010 attracted a fairly regular attendance of around twenty students, despite being scheduled for Friday afternoons! A historically-based scientific narrative from the 'scientist in residence' was interspersed with sessions led by a range of guest speakers who were actively engaged in collaborative projects. Sessions were also included for the students themselves to present work in progress for discussion and debate.

Interestingly, a number of these students could be said to be individuals who, to some extent, already had 'a foot in both camps'. These included a retired GP studying multi-disciplinary printmaking, a practicing theatre nurse studying a part-time arts masters programme, a part-time Fine Art student who had previously had a career as a biologist, and a PhD student whose professional career was as a graphics designer and illustrator for scientific journals. A common statement from these students was that in many cases they felt they were living a kind of schizophrenic existence – the requirements and techniques relating to their 'day job' and their arts study occupying separate parts of their intellect and creativity. These participants in particular were keen to find ways of expressing and exploring a synthesis, feeling it was possible for them to create imaginative work that drew on their broader professional knowledge and experience. Yet others in the group had a more traditional arts educational background – often, and commonly, having 'enjoyed' aspects of science at school, but then having been steered away or frightened off when the disciplines became more complex.

Our objectives with the seminar series were threefold and have a close relationship to Abbs' principles of existential, collaborative and cultural educational activity:

1. To provide a programme of lectures tracing the historical and cultural contexts surrounding some of the major paradigm shifts in science.

In deciding to include a series of semi-formal lectures on the history of scientific ideas we were inspired by John Dewey's 1934 statement that:

"When an art product once attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience" Dewey, J, 1934 "Art as Experience" p3 We would assert that in the broader sweep of the history of ideas then when intellectual and scientific innovations attain 'classic status', they too become isolated from the conditions in which they had an original

significance. Ideas without historical context can too easily become iconic and degenerate into mere mantra. Through our offering of a discourse which covered lectures on “Critical thinking: Celestial Spheres and Copernicus”, “Renaissance, Enlightenment and Paradigms”, “Back to the future – Postmodernism and Dialogue” students were re-introduced to a cultural chronology of scientific discovery that allowed them to consider these ideas alongside the context of their own knowledge of artistic movements in similar periods. Used later, these insights would give arts students greater confidence in their future investigations and intellectual enquiry in interdisciplinary activity. Our account also introduced the simple but often overlooked fact that scientists are also human and what they are remembered for in a somewhat remote and detached way may have constituted only a relatively small portion of their life’s work – and perhaps not always one they might have anticipated as their scientific legacy!

2. To explore a shared lexicon for discussing research methods and approaches to promote transdisciplinary dialogue.

Traditional academic disciplines can be considered as languages; we each have our own mother tongue, but can also become passably fluent in others. By examining the major research approaches across different disciplinary fields we were able to identify some of the fundamental commonalities that underpin successful research activities in general. In particular, by abstracting and widening the usual narrow focus on ‘the scientific principle’ we were able to illustrate in much broader terms to studio based arts practitioners the implied parallels and similarities between traditional scientific activity and their own artistic quests. (Communicable, novel, repeatable and testable were terms found to have a surprising resonance between the two communities). Whilst accepting that some terminologies are used in highly specific ways it was hoped that an increased awareness of a wider range of bibliographic references would avoid some of the more obvious pitfalls of postmodernism discussed earlier. A wide reading list was supplied, encompassing Kuhn, Popper, Feyerabend, Sim, Elkins, Morgan and Ede. Students were consistently encouraged to follow the principle that “you can only find good answers by asking good questions!”

3. To offer workshops and presentations in collaborative art-science projects.

A number of guest speakers with experience of working in an art-science collaborative environment were invited to talk about their experiences and present work for discussion. This included practicing artists, academic scientists and arts researchers and

gave students the opportunity to engage directly with and question speakers about the nature of collaborative enquiry. The sessions explored the difficulties and opportunities this kind of work offers, and what each party gets from the experience. Over subsequent weeks it was striking how students’ confidence increased in devising strategies and project ideas for working in similar ways with peers from other disciplines.

Outcomes from the Project Dialogue seminars

In terms of the outcomes we can identify from the seminar series there has undoubtedly been a significantly increased level of interest amongst the art and design postgraduate community in working in this territory, as those attending the series gradually disseminated their experiences amongst their peers. And for the attendees, there has certainly been an increasing confidence both in the work they’re developing and in their communication and dialogue with practitioners from scientific backgrounds.

The images accompanying this paper for example have all been produced by current postgraduate students who attended the sessions, and who are producing work intended for their final MA show, or as part of their PhD study. In one case a student was sufficiently inspired by the seminars to curate a small public exhibition in a city centre gallery space called ‘Small Science’ – exhibiting work she commissioned from teams of art students working with science-based peers. A further student, now graduated from her MA programme, is currently writing a proposal for a doctoral thesis which will bring together drawing and anthropological study, whilst another graduate is making a new sculptural piece based on the periodic table. Several have expressed a wish to continue to develop new and further opportunities for cross-collaborative work, and we are currently looking for funding to support this.

Recommendations

It’s been clear to us through our various activities as a research group that developing transdisciplinary teaching packages not only benefits the students by offering a broader educational experience but can also overturn staff misconceptions through working closely with other practitioners from dissimilar backgrounds. Our regular input over the last 4 years to a master’s module ‘Research Methods’, for example, has resulted in a new language of discourse entering into discussions between staff and students about the research methods appropriated into studio practice. Our experience has shown however that it is vital to have certain things in place to develop successful and challenging cross-curricula pedagogies: Identify scientists within your Institution who care about a transdisciplinary approach and who have a useful background in philosophy or history of science

suitable for building into a series of postgraduate seminars.

Look for novel ways to overcome the difficulties of securing funding from within one's own Institution for such transdisciplinary activities. Our PD seminars were funded from a one-off source, but it is conceivable that staff development funds could be tapped into for this purpose. Ideally, such a project needs visibility (and support) at faculty level in order to secure funds and commitment.

Effective publicity and access: we used our post-graduate online network to publicise the seminars in advance, as well as recording and archiving the talks for later online access by others. In addition, students themselves disseminated material and new ideas through their studio environment and their usual scheduled workshops and feedback sessions.

In general we would also advocate two major factors that are imperative for the HE sector to appreciate and accommodate, though in the current economic climate these may constitute a steeper uphill battle than usual: Institutions need to be much more flexible in their approach to postgraduate teaching to enable and encourage inter-departmental cooperation.

A recognition that greater (reclaimed?) power is devolved to academics rather than managerial structures in developing innovative curriculum ideas!

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Rhian Solomon is a Visual Artist whose practice is concerned with drawing parallels between skin and cloth. Extensive cross-disciplinary research underpins much of her work, which has culminated in informal & formal experimental collaborations between medical and textile professionals. Current research interests now focus on the potential for knowledge transfer between the realms of Pattern Cutting for Fashion and Plastic Surgery. These collaborations are manifested through works by the artist combining materials and processes to create gallery-based installations, research projects and interactive academic & audience-facing workshops. Solomon is Artist in Residence at The University for the Creative Arts and is a visiting lecturer for a number of HE institutions including Manchester Metropolitan University and The Royal College of Art.

Overview

The unique relationship that exists between Skin and Cloth has been explored in many contexts in both historical and contemporary cultures. Manifestations of this exploration have included a range of innovative technologies, such as 'smart textiles' and artificial skin (Simonson 2008: 217 – 221). Artists and designers have also shared curiosity in these affiliations, presenting notions of identity through metaphorical representations of skin and cloth, the body and dress. The work of Oron Catts, for example, promotes the culturing of skin cells within a laboratory environment to create bespoke seamless garments. This serves to further challenge our perceptions of what is considered to be skin or cloth and begins to highlight the apparent yet barely explored connections that exist between Plastic Surgery and Fashion. On initial review of the commonality between these professions, a range of knowledge components can potentially be transferred concerning fabric, technique and wider practices. This paper shall focus upon exploring this very potential for cross disciplinary practices between the realms of Pattern Cutting within Fashion professions¹ and Plastic Surgery. By means of textual references, a survey and practice based case studies.

¹ For the purpose of this study, the terminology 'Pattern Cutting within Fashion' or 'Fashion Professions' refers to the use of patterns in the following disciplines – Menswear, Womenswear, Bespoke Tailoring, Millinery and Cordwaining – whom utilise a variation of patterns across their practices.

Background

As way of initiating the exploration of the collaborative opportunities between plastic surgery & pattern making, we must first look to the points of commonality that already exist between the professions in both the materials and processes that are utilised.

Materials – Grain

As the grain of cloth must be considered during garment design and construction – to achieve a variation in drape, a good fit and desirable aesthetic – so too must the grain of skin be considered during surgical procedure. In textile practice, the grain of the majority of fabrics is relatively consistent throughout and is dictated by the method of production (woven, knitted, crocheted or knotted). The way in which the cloth is then cut in accordance to the garment pattern and Selvage edge² – Straight grain³, Cross grain⁴, on the Bias⁵ – will dictate how the fabric will drape, ultimately informing the overall style and aesthetic of the garment.

The grain of skin is determined by the way in which collagen fibres align themselves across the body and is unique to each individual. These lines of cleavage are characteristic for each part of the body. The direction in which they travel can vary greatly over the surface in its entirety and also between different body configurations. The anatomist Karl Langer was the first to illustrate this phenomena in 1861. (Langer 1978: 3-8). (See fig 3) By puncturing numerous holes at short distances from each other into the skin of a cadaver with a tool that had a circular shaped tip, he noticed that the resultant punctures had ellipsoidal shapes.

From this he was able to observe patterns across the body which illustrated line directions by the longer axis of the ellipsoidal holes. (Langer 1978: 3-8) Langer's observations have allowed Plastic Surgeons to understand the variation in directional grain of the skin. This has informed surgical practice in guiding the direction in which an elective incision(s) must be made during a procedure.

² Selvage Edge – The edge of a fabric that will not fray or unravel, which is resultant of how a fabric is constructed.

³ Straight Grain – Is made up of threads that run parallel to the selvage edge. The grain line of pattern pieces to be cut with a straight grain will be arranged parallel to the selvage.

⁴ Cross Grain – Is made up of threads that run perpendicular to the selvage edge. The grain line of pattern pieces to be cut cross ways will be arranged at a 90 degree angle to the selvage.

⁵ Bias – The diagonal direction along the fabric which has stretch. The grain line of pattern pieces to be cut along the bias will be arranged at a 45 degree angle to the selvage and cross grain.

Generally a surgical cut will be carried out following their direction, as incisions made parallel to these linear pathways heal better and produce less scarring. Incisions that run counter tend to gape and tear more so (Langer 1978: 3-8).

Materials - Aesthetic qualities

In addition to considering the direction in which the grain of skin is travelling, skin quality must also be addressed by the surgeons, with regards to its age, thickness and its colouration. Hair also is another factor to contend with, ensuring that the direction of growth is maintained once sections of skin have been transposed. There is of course much variation in each of the qualities mentioned above, across the body surface, and from patient to patient - The skin of an eyelid, for example, being far thinner than that of the elbow. The skin of the face perhaps having more freckles and pigmentation than the skin of the belly. The skin upon the scalp having more hair follicles than the skin on the sole of the foot. Great care must be taken to match skin qualities when grafting or transposing skin.

The variation that exists in skin by no means rivals the variation of cloth that is available to the Fashion Designer. Yet similar considerations must be adhered to in this context also. For example, a surface pattern that may be present (woven or printed) the consistency of which should ideally be continued across the garment, despite multiple cuts and pattern components. Also the pile⁶ or sheen of a cloth, which can dictate the direction in which light falls upon the garment, offering different colour variations and aesthetic qualities. Consideration to these qualities must be made during cutting and construction processes to dictate how they feature upon a garment - To maximise or to minimise the characteristics of the cloth is the decision of the Pattern Cutter and Designer.

Through outlining the qualities of the corresponding materials of each trade we begin to see how their inherent properties inform the assemblage and manipulation of 'cloth' within the professions. We must now look to the style of techniques and processes utilised by each, delving further into their correlations.

Technique - Planning

A Plastic Surgeon must consider and create a good functional mend that is technically sound but also aesthetically pleasing to her/his client. A Pattern Cutter must also promote an appropriate or interesting drape and style,

⁶ In textiles pile is the raised surface or nap of a fabric, which is made of upright loops or strands of yarn. Examples of pile textiles are carpets, corduroy, velvet. The word is derived from Latin pilus for hair.

a well fitted garment that again is aesthetically easy on the eye and that is fit for purpose.

In their preparatory stages both require bespoke planning to proceed with their product or outcome. In couture and tailoring trades, for example, several fittings will be made upon a client or live model and a toile⁷ or several will be constructed to obtain the perfect fit (Fischer 2009: 58-59) - the alterations being carefully marked onto the fabric. In cosmetic and reconstructive surgery, procedures also can consist of several consultations, and perhaps even several operating stages, dependant upon the complexity of the operation. Generally a Plastic Surgeon will plan for a procedure by marking out the areas of incision using a pen. These lines provide a useful guide for the operation as the tension of the skin alters once initial incisions have been made. The Surgeon A. Limberg planned the majority of his operations using origami models that were heavily based upon geometric theory.

Technique - Geometry

The opening and closing of angles

A technical consideration that must be followed in each of these professions is the use of geometry - in particular the opening and closing of angles as a means of throwing fullness or achieving body contoured outcomes (Fischer 2009: 30-31) - This is present in the case of Fashion in the creation of darts⁸, pivots, pleats, gathers. And in surgery, particularly concerning the manipulation of flaps of skin - through the approximation of operative wound edges, creating or abolishing standing and lying cones⁹ (Limberg 1984:13).

In a Surgical context, fullness can be both desirable and undesirable in its placement or application - in the former setting, in the reconstruction of a nose (fig 8), in the latter, in reducing gathers of excess skin that form upon the body surface. This can be controlled by carefully planning the size of the angles of incisions prior to the surgical procedure or through the excision of excess tissue which will permit the conical gatherings to lie flat. (Papel 2009: 30).

Fashion mimics these aesthetic and constructive considerations in creating structured areas of a garment that can alter and enhance the silhouette of the body offering shape and volume through such techniques.

⁷ A toile is a version of a garment made by a fashion designer or dressmaker to test a pattern. They are usually made in cheap material, as multiple toiles may be made in the process of perfecting a design.

⁸ Darts are folds sewn into fabric to help provide a three-dimensional shape to a garment.

⁹ Standing and lying cones are gathers of skin that occur during surgical procedures when two edges of an operative wound are brought together or approximated. The closure of angles during operations results in what are commonly referred to by Surgeons as Dog Ears, excess flaps of skin.

Also, cosmetically in managing or accommodating undesirable defects, such as an anomaly in posture or weight, by creating a balanced physique through the tailoring of dress. The introduction of padding, interlining, corsetry and quilting can further.

Technique - Joining

Finally, it is worth briefly mentioning a similarity in the techniques that are utilised by each profession as a means of fastening or tacking surfaces together. Tailor tacking is a process used in Surgery to temporarily stitch skin prior to making final incisions and suture fixation. The style of stitch is similar to a basting stitch which is used to temporarily join elements of a garment, and is used frequently during a Breast Lift procedure – The Tailor Tack Mastopexy. (Whidden 1978: 347-354)

The paper now shifts to reflect upon a handful of case studies that directly reference how the worlds of Plastic Surgery and Pattern Cutting have combined. To include also a contemporary case study in applying surgical technique to garment construction.

Case studies

The pioneering work of Surgeon Harold Gillies (1882-1960) consistently references skin as cloth in his documentation and planning of reconstructive procedures. Here cloth patterns were used to calculate the amount of skin required to repair the damaged faces of WW1 soldiers (Hartley 2005).

This was prior to the development of free skin grafts¹ and distant free skin flaps² and so the transference of sections of skin was only made possible by maintaining a blood supply from the donor site through the use of pedicle flaps³.

The case below outlines how the arm is used as a vehicle to transfer living tissue from the stomach to the face. Towards the middle of the 20th century, Russian Surgeon A. Limberg focussed much of his work upon the design of pedicle skin flaps - Again, using fabric and paper models and patterns as a means of calculating and planning procedures on the surface of the face and body (Limberg 1984). Unlike many of his predecessors, Limberg studied the body surface geometrically (as opposed to topographically) and was innovative in developing complex mathematical indexes to plan procedures.

1 Free Skin Graft - the detaching of healthy skin from one part of the body to repair areas of lost or damaged skin in another. The skin is completely detached from the vascular supply of the donor site and its survival is dependant upon the blood supply from the recipient site

2 Distant free skin flaps – Are transported without their blood supply, to be reattached to vessels at the recipient site.

3 Pedicle skin flap – Transferred to the donor site whilst still attached to its blood supply.

These strategies would be simplified and placed into practice through the use of moving models constructed from Linen, Rubber, Tin, Plywood, and Paper that communicated how the skin would respond during surgical operations. A reference that poetically draws these two specialisms together, which has been key in the conception of the Skinship project⁴, is the work of Surgeon R. J. Wise.

Here the patterns of garments are used to directly inform both the planning and undertaking of surgical technique. The Wise 'skin' Pattern, which was developed in the 1950's, is a technique that is used as a means of planning Breast reduction surgery (Reduction Mammoplasty). Its inspiration was drawn from the units of a brassier garment pattern and the corresponding size index associated with breast size (32A, B, C). Consisting of 3 key components that were used to mark out and manipulate the breast (figs 19 and 20), this technique revolutionised this method of surgery and continues to be practiced in medicine today (Wise et al 1963). Here we begin to see the visual languages and processes of Pattern Cutting and Plastic Surgery collide.

Much of the documentation upon cross disciplinary working between the professions of Plastic Surgery and Pattern Cutting has looked at how Pattern Cutting and Fashion practices have informed surgical technique. But how have Plastic Surgical practices informed Pattern Making processes?

A contemporary study that has sought to obtain practice based evidence in understanding this has been conducted by the author of this paper and Professor Paul Rider, a tutor in Innovative Pattern Cutting. This has allowed for surgical technique to be applied to the design of garments. Here a handful of simplistic surgical techniques from A. A. Limberg (Limberg 1984) were translated onto cloth and freely draped upon the stand to develop necklines and garment styles.

4 Skinship – The Skinship manifesto seeks to create a forum that brings together practitioners from numerous creative and medical fields, to collaborate and develop opportunities for knowledge transfer. Currently the focus of this shared working is based upon Surgical and Fashion based disciplines. The project will look to encompass additional professions as it develops. The routes of knowledge transfer that are currently being investigated include Design, Educative and Communicative Processes.

Method

Having developed a strong case for cross disciplinary working it was decided to obtain professional opinion from practitioners within the fields of Pattern Cutting within Fashion and Plastic Surgery today – predominantly to investigate both their openness to collaboration, but also to develop further knowledge of each of their practices (particularly in relation to how they plan procedures, communicate to clients and educate other professionals within their field) and to create a network of collaborators –This has taken the form of a survey and has formed the first stage of the Skinship research project (see foot 9).

The Skinship electronic Survey was sent to 346 Plastic Surgeons whom were members of The British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS). 49 of whom partook. Obtaining a sample of Pattern Cutting based practitioners proved slightly more challenging in that no known national professional body currently exists that encompasses this profession and variations of it. The database for these participants (62) was built by the author – and included bespoke tailors, subject leaders in Pattern Cutting/Fashion at Further and Higher Educational institutions, Designer Makers whom utilised Pattern Cutting in the creation of accessories and products –Milliners¹, Cordwainers², also researchers into Reduction waste Pattern Cutting. 22 partook.

Results

Within your practice as a Surgeon have you considered alternative, non medical disciplines as a means of problem solving, or developing techniques and procedures?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	65.3%	32
No	34.7%	17
<i>answered question</i>		49
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Within your practice as a Pattern Cutter have you considered alternative, medical disciplines as a means of problem solving, or designing techniques and processes?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31.8%	7
No	68.2%	15
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		0

¹ Millinery – A professional whom makes and sells hats.

² Cordwainer – A professional whom makes shoes and other articles from fine soft leather.

General inspirational references cited – outside of the participants professional field

Plastic Surgeons	Pattern Cutting professions
Clothes design and fabrication 3D Puzzles Dress Making Engineering Construction Joinery Sculpture in clay, paper and foam Art Knitting Pattern Cutting Laser 3D surface scanning Karate Biomechanics Virtual Reality Children's toys Social Anthropology Philosophy	Plastic Surgery Museum Collections for visual referencing – The Hunterian Museum Geometry Anatomical and Biological Dissection, X Rays Ergonomics Prosthetics Film – Hannibal Lecter in particular

More specifically... Within your practice as a Surgeon have you considered Fashion disciplines as a means of problem solving or developing techniques and procedures?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	38.8%	19
No	61.2%	30
<i>answered question</i>		49
<i>skipped question</i>		0

More specifically..... Within your practice as a Pattern Cutter have you consulted Surgical disciplines as a means of problem solving or designing techniques and processes?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	22.7%	5
No	77.3%	17
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Specific inspirational references to opposing practice.

Plastic Surgeons	Pattern Cutting professions
I make clothes - I use Pattern Cutting and Dress Making techniques I use Pressure garments to aid in scarring I use my tie to demonstrate pedicle flaps to patients I use cloth and paper patterns of flaps and grafts to check dimensions I use the terminology of pleats and darts which is slightly nicer than 'dog ears' In theoretical discussions I use Fabric in Flap and Graft design	I have recreated organs in knit I have referred to Surgical practices for visualising and generating ideas Dissection – reverse engineering – taking apart a surface to lay it flat in intriguing ways I am looking now at ways of manipulating fat around the body to inspire my current collection of garments, - I am interested in obesity and liposuction,

Interpretation

Of the two professional groups, the Surgeons appeared to be more open to collaboration, with a considerably higher percentage of these practitioners looking to (non medical) specialisms outside of their field as a means of problem solving and in designing techniques and processes. The volume and variation of specialisms that this cohort quoted as their inspirations was also proportionally more comprehensive than their Pattern Cutting counterparts. 94% of Surgeons also either agreed or strongly agreed that their practice could benefit from learning from non medical disciplines. A relatively high percentage of Pattern Cutters (80%) also believed that their practice could benefit from learning from medical disciplines. In addition 39% of the Plastic Surgeons surveyed have already, more specifically, considered Fashion based disciplines as a means of informing their practice, as opposed to 22% of Pattern Cutters considering Surgical disciplines. This result was rather unexpected based on the assumption that cross disciplinary working is perhaps more widely promoted within the creative industries. Could this however be due to a more prevalent exposure of Surgeons to the application of textiles and fabric patterns utilised by surgical scholars previously – as we have seen in the references made within this paper. Cloth is also a more readily available material as opposed to Skin allowing Surgeons to experiment more so with this material within their practice.

Conclusion

The findings of this paper have demonstrated 3 key points when discussing the potential for cross disciplinary practices between Pattern Cutters and Plastic Surgeons.

1. That cross disciplinary working between such practices already exists but in a relatively simplistic broad sense. There is a baseline of evidence to suggest that value can be gained from the opposing practice.
2. There is an openness to collaboration between these professions – The surgeons perhaps currently more involved than the Pattern Cutters. This may be due to a more prevalent exposure to Pattern Cutting and the use of cloth in this profession retrospectively as opposed to Surgery in Fashion Professions.
3. There is a large amount of unexplored territory in understanding exactly the extent to how each of these professions may benefit from the other. This shall be explored further through the Skinship program.

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Illustrations

Fig 1

Catts. O. and Zurr. I. Victimless Leather. Illus.in, Hauser. J. Sk-interfaces.(Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008) 78

Fig 2

Fischer, A. Basics – Fashion Design – Construction, Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2009. 124

Fig 3

Self Harm Minimisation, Tony White, retrieved March 22nd 2011 from the World Wide Web

<http://graffiti99.blogspot.com/archive/2009/01/14/self-harm-minimisation.html>

Fig 4

Fischer, A. Basics – Fashion Design – Construction, Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2009. 60.

Fig 5

Abdominal markings, Milk Photography, Retrieved March 22nd 2011 from the World Wide Web

<http://corbis.co.in/>

Fig 6

Fischer, A. Basics – Fashion Design – Construction, Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2009. 30

Fig 7

Limberg, A. A. 1963 The Planning Plastic Operations on the Body Surface: Theory and Practice. Trans A. Wolfe, USA: D. C. Heath and Co, 1984. 94.

Fig 8

Limberg, A. A. 1963 The Planning Plastic Operations on the Body Surface: Theory and Practice. Trans A. Wolfe, USA: D. C. Heath and Co, 1984. 124.

Fig 9

Fischer, A. Basics – Fashion Design – Construction, Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, 2009. 151.

Fig 10

Greenlees, R. 'Body of Sculpture' Crafts Magazine, May/Jun. 2010: 97. (courtesy of Wellcome Images)

Fig 11 – 17

Project Façade 2005. P. Hartley. (Courtesy of The Gillies Archive) Retrieved April 12th on the World Wide Web.

http://www.projectfacade.com/index.php?/news/comments/gillies_pattern_making/

Fig 18

Limberg, A. A. 1963 The Planning Plastic Operations on the Body Surface: Theory and Practice. Trans A. Wolfe, USA: D. C. Heath and Co, 1984. 252.

Fig 19

Wise, R. J. Plastic and reconstructive surgery 'A preliminary report of q method of planning the mammoplasty 17;367, (1956) 290.

Fig 20

Wise, R. J. Plastic and reconstructive surgery 'A preliminary report of q method of planning the mammoplasty 17;367, (1956) 293

Fig 21

Limberg, A. A. 1963 The Planning Plastic Operations on the Body Surface: Theory and Practice. Trans A. Wolfe, USA: D. C. Heath and Co, 1984. 425.

Fig 22

Limberg, A. A. 1963 The Planning Plastic Operations on the Body Surface: Theory and Practice. Trans A. Wolfe, USA: D. C. Heath and Co, 1984. 426.

Figs 23 - 26

Rhian Solomon, Paul Rider – Skinship. Unpublished photographs taken by Author.

Collaboration in Practice: The evolution of Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things¹

Jane Wildgoose

In 2006 Amy Meyers, Director of the Yale Center for British Art, asked me if I would like to create a “cabinet in celebration of the friendship” between two extraordinary 18th-century women: Mary Delany (1700-1788) – creator of almost 1,000 botanically accurate “paper mosaic” flower illustrations, needlewoman, maker of decorative shell-work – and Margaret, Duchess of Portland (1715-1785), an important collector of natural history and artefacts: to accompany the exhibition *Mrs Delany and her Circle*, curated by garden historian Mark Laird and art historian Alicia Weisberg-Roberts, planned to be exhibited at the Center in 2009.

Amy’s invitation imposed neither limits nor expectations upon me. No written proposal was sought at the outset – nor, in fact, until over a year after the collaboration was first proposed. Looking back, the project developed like a journey – or perhaps, more accurately, an expedition – in which I gradually mapped out new territory as I went along, helped at strategic points by introductions to guides and fellow travellers in response to research discoveries made on my way. While practice that is research-led and open-ended is well suited to working alone or with a small group of people, it becomes much more complicated – and risky – when collaborating with large, high-profile institutions, whose processes were not established to accommodate artists with a lateral approach to curation. This project could not have grown as it did, nor been realised in its ambitious scope without Amy’s extraordinary championship and facilitation, which was matched by all the team who worked with me. This paper offers a narrative account of the process that evolved in partnership to become an unprecedented artist-led collaboration for the Yale collections –

in which I was paired with the Center for British Art, the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University, and the Yale University Art Gallery – primarily

1 Wildgoose, Jane. *Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things*. Site-specific installation accompanying *Mrs Delany and her Circle* at Yale Center for British Art, NH, CT, USA. 24.9.2009 - 18.7.2010; in revised form at Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, UK. 18.2.2010 - 1.5.2010. Also see: Wildgoose, Jane. *Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things: An Installation* by Jane Wildgoose in celebration of the friendship between Mrs. Mary Delany and The Duchess Dowager of Portland. Yale Center for British Art. New Haven, CT, USA. 2009. Murray, Jenni, interview with Jane Wildgoose and Amy Meyers. *Woman’s Hour*. 18.2.2010. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00qmd5z> accessed 26.4.2011.

focusing on the pairings, conversations, and co-curation that enabled several hundred scientific specimens to be exhibited with decorative arts and specially devised handcrafted objects, in the context of a site-specific installation.

I first met Amy at the Ways of Making and Knowing conference she convened in London in 2005, where curator and textile conservator Mary Brooks gave a paper in which she cited my work in collaboration with Maidstone Museum during 2003–04² – where I had worked with the collections of costume, natural history and human history to evoke the spirit of Miss Havisham³, the jilted bride in Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations*⁴. At the time I met Amy, I was concentrating on a series of photographic portraits exploring sitters’ relationships with objects as part of a NESTA Dream Time Fellowship⁵. On the basis of these photographs, and my documentation of the project with Maidstone Museum, Amy would enrol me into the *Mrs Delany* project at the end of 2006.

In 2007 I was invited to participate in a series of meetings in London with the multidisciplinary international team of curators and historians researching and developing *Mrs Delany and her Circle*⁶. From the outset it

2 Brooks, M.M. “Decay, preservation and the making of meaning”. In: P. Smith, ed. *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*. Postprints of the 2005 Conference. Wellcome Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London, Yale Center for British Art and the Wellcome Trust. *Cultural Histories of the Material World*. Harvard University Press / Bard Graduate Centre. (Forthcoming).

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4 Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. London, 1861.

5 Wildgoose, Jane. *The Wildgoose Memorial Portrait Project*: part of NESTA Dream Time Fellowship to develop *The Wildgoose Memorial Library*. London, UK. 2005- 06. http://www.janewildgoose.co.uk/projects_and_publications/wml_portrait_project.html accessed 26.4.2011.

6 The team included Clarissa Campbell Orr, Reader in Enlightenment, Gender and Court Studies at Anglia Ruskin University; Clare Browne, Curator of Textiles at the Victoria & Albert Museum; Kim Sloan, Curator of Prints & Drawings, and of the Enlightenment Gallery at the British Museum; John Edmondson, Head of Science at Liverpool Museums; Peter Bower, Forensic Paper Historian and Paper Analyst, and a number of other historians together with Tim Knox, Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum.

was understood that I would be included in the team's process of research-sharing, but that my work would remain somehow distinct from, though complementary to, the main exhibition. In March I joined the team for a lunch given for Ruth Hayden – a descendant of Mary Delany who wrote the biography of her published by the British Museum⁷; and in July I was invited to participate in two days of workshops at the Soane Museum. By this point, decisions were being made about the many aspects of Delany's surviving material that would form the core of the exhibition *Mrs Delany & her Circle*, including her embroideries and paper collages depicting flowers. I decided to turn my attention to aspects of the material culture of the two friends' lives that had been dispersed or disappeared: the Duchess of Portland's extraordinary collections of natural history and artefacts, sold at auction in 1786 over 38 days; and the ephemeral shellflower work to which Delany refers in her correspondence, made to decorate her home, and as gifts for her friend.

In October 2007 I was in New York and took the opportunity to travel to Connecticut to visit the Yale Center for British Art to look up the copy of the sale catalogue to the Duchess of Portland's collection in the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts⁸. The following month I gave an informal presentation at a team meeting in London – where I showed the frontispiece to the catalogue with excerpts from its preface and descriptions of auction lots; selected extracts concerning Mary Delany's shell-work from Ruth Hayden's biography; notes I had taken at the workshops in July with pointers to research to follow up, and photographs I had taken of a little stuffed hummingbird and a shellflower arrangement in my own collection that had become emblematic of my thinking about the material qualities for my project.



1. Hummingbird and shellflowers at The Wildgoose Memorial Library © Jane Wildgoose 2007

I concluded my presentation, and a printed version of it that I gave to Amy, with this brief and entirely open-ended proposal: "Taking the frontispiece to the sale catalogue of the Duchess of Portland's Museum as a starting point and guide, to create an installation bringing together 18th century-objects and newly made items that together celebrate the spirit of collecting, and the relationship between artificialia and naturalia, in the lives of Mrs. Delany and the Duchess of Portland."⁹

I had first seen a reproduction of the frontispiece to the Portland Museum sale catalogue in the British Museum publication, *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*. I had been fascinated by this image, but frustrated by the limited information accompanying it - which simply stated that wealthy collectors like the Duchess of Portland were more interested in amassing a high quality collection than the science related to it.¹⁰

9 Wildgoose, Jane. *Promiscuous Assemblage*. Unpublished presentation, November 2007. The Wildgoose Memorial Library.

10 Huxley, Robert. "Natural history collectors and their collections: 'simpling macaronis' and instruments of empire". In: Sloan, Kim, ed. *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*. London: British Museum Press, 2003, 87-88.

7 Hayden, Ruth. *Mrs Delany: Her life and her flowers*. London: The British Museum Press, 1980.

8 Lightfoot, John. *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum, Lately the Property of the Duchess Dowager of Portland, Deceased*. London, 1786.

However, when I began to read the catalogue, I was struck by a statement in its preface by the botanist John Lightfoot (1735-1788), who wrote: "Some Persons, perhaps, may object to the Promiscuous Assemblage of the various Subjects here exhibited, and be ready to wish that they had been allotted in Order and Method, according to Genus and Species."

Lightfoot further explained that during the Duchess's lifetime her shells, at least, were in the process of being ordered according to the (then new) scientific principles of Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778); that she hired the taxonomist's favourite pupil, Daniel Solander (1733-1782) to take charge of the project – but that Solander died soon after beginning this Herculean task, followed three years later by the Duchess: "to the great and irreparable loss to science"¹¹. Lightfoot's preface prompted me to explore the Promiscuous Assemblage of the auction of the Portland collection, with which Delany was evidently familiar, with close reference to lots in the catalogue; and to counterpoint it with *The Order of Things* – the Linnaean taxonomic system, that remains foundational to the systematic scientific ordering of natural history specimens in museums throughout the world today – which the Duchess adopted to inform her aims for naming and classifying her collections; and which Mary Delany referred to when naming her albums of "paper mosaciks" *A Catalogue of Plants Copied from Nature...disposed in alphabetical Order, according to the Generic and Specific Names of Linnæus. The Friendship between the two women would be played out through collections objects and handcrafted items reflecting the passion they shared for interpreting natural history – both decoratively and scientifically – within the domestic worlds they designed and inhabited.*

I was invited to the Yale Center for British Art in February 2008 for three days of back-to-back meetings, during which I was introduced to collection managers at Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History. Our conversations focused on the contrast between the Promiscuous Assemblage of the Duchess of Portland's sale and *The Order of Things* – and immediately my research began to spring into life as my new colleagues joined in my treasure hunt to discover the contents of the Duchess's vast, scientifically important lost collections: identifying specimens, and enthusiastically introducing me to endless store rooms, cupboards and drawers full of historical specimens of shells, corals, butterflies, birds, stuffed and skeletal animals, and fossils.

It was during this visit to Yale – over a year after Amy extended her initial invitation to me – that she suggested I might consider designing a cabinet, which

the installation team at the Center could build for me. She also identified an exhibition bay at the Center that I might like my installation to occupy – suggesting a much larger and more ambitious scale for the finished work than I initially envisaged. I had by this time discovered two academic papers: Mrs Delany and Ceramics in the Objectscape, by Jo Dahn, and Scientific Symmetries, by Emma Spary. Drawing on evidence in surviving correspondence, Dahn suggests that, like many women of her time and class, Delany created a "decorative objectscape" in which to situate herself "almost like a self-portrait" – especially with regard to her collection of china, in which each delicate item represented an association of friendship or family with the person who gave her the object.¹² In Spary's paper, an 18th-century natural history collection belonging to Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson (1702-1744), featuring elaborate symmetrical arrangements of specimens, furnished the model for my cabinet, while questions she raises about the co-existence of decorative and scientific order in 18th-century natural history collections – and our inability, today, to give the decorative element credibility in a scientific context – formed the basis for my thinking about, and co-curation of, *The Order of Things*.¹³

In London, in March 2008, I presented images of Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson's cabinet, and an early 18th-century illustration from Spary's paper, depicting drawers of butterflies, moths and insects from the collection of Levinus Vincent.¹⁴ Then I began to prepare a presentation for the rest of the academic team who were working on the exhibition at the Center, plus exhibition designer, Stephen Saitas – who was engaged to create the designs for Mrs Delany and her Circle – and the Center's installation team: without whose agreement to build my cabinet and other display elements the project would not be realised as an exhibition¹⁵. At Yale in September 2008 I presented drawings for the cabinet emblemising Friendship¹⁶, together with the frontispiece to the Portland sale catalogue (representing Promiscuous Assemblage), and the illustration of Levinus Vincent's collection that would form the basis for *The Order of Things*.

¹² Dahn, Jo, "Mrs Delany and Ceramics in the Objectscape". In: *Interpreting Ceramics Vol.1* (2000).

¹³ Spary, E.C. "Scientific Symmetries". In: *History of Science* 42 (2004).

¹⁴ Unknown artist. "Pinacotheca I." In: Levinus Vincent, *Elenchus tabularum, Pinacothecarum*. Harlem, 1719. Cited in: Spary, "Scientific Symmetries".

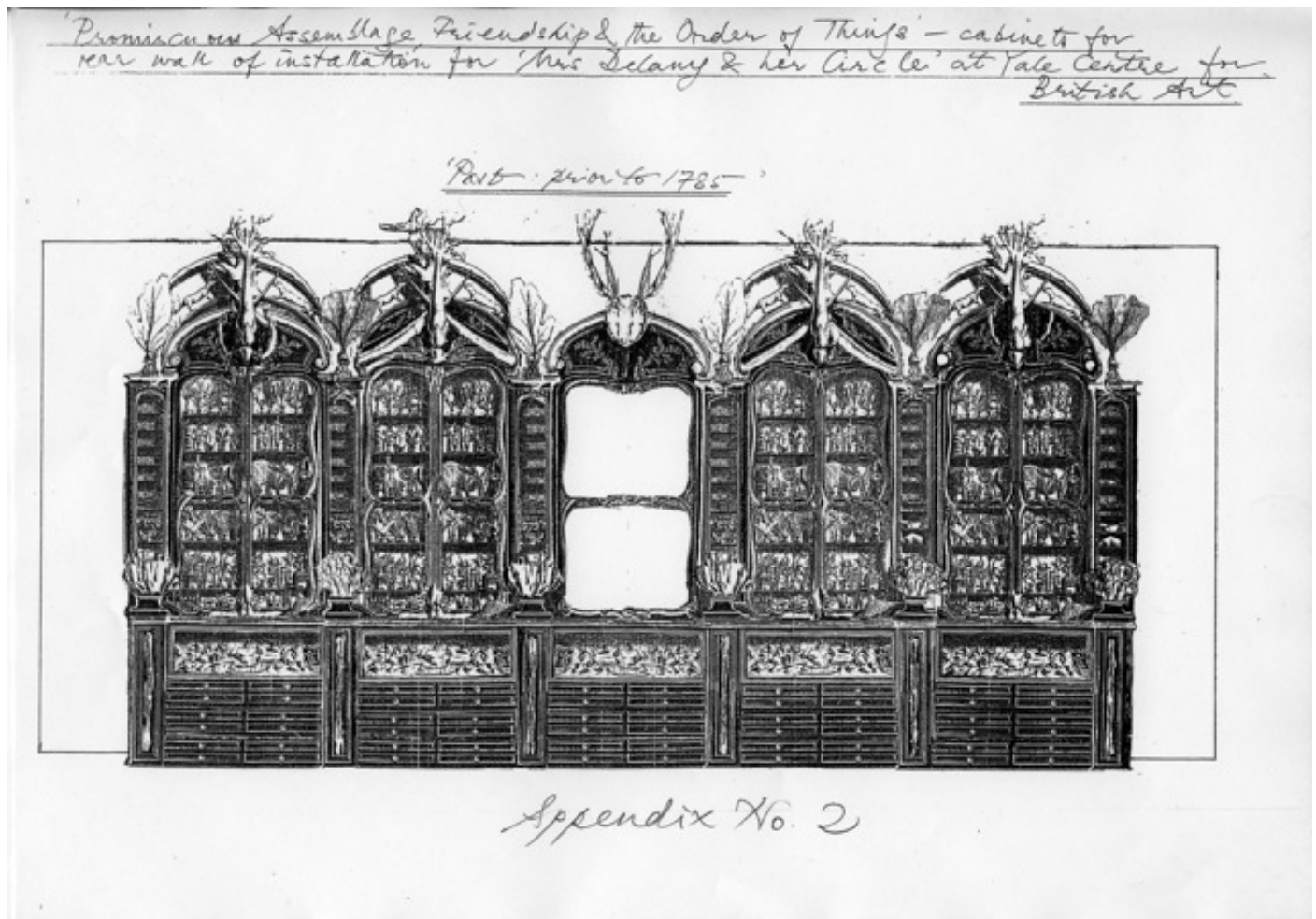
¹⁵ Wildgoose, Jane. Promiscuous Assemblage. Unpublished presentation, September 2008. The Wildgoose Memorial Library.

¹⁶ Wildgoose, Jane. Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things – cabinets for the rear wall of installation for 'Mrs. Delany & her Circle' at Yale Center for British Art. Collaged drawing. Basic build for installation for 'Mrs Delany & her Circle' at Yale Center for British Art. Collaged drawing. September 2008 presentation/November 2008 specification. (Unpublished). The Wildgoose Memorial Library.

¹¹ Lightfoot, Catalogue, iii.

I confessed I was not used to producing technical drawings, and was immensely grateful when Stephen, the exhibition designer, promptly offered to provide these, based on my specifications.

2. Design for Friendship cabinet
© Jane Wildgoose 2008



As usual, I gave my card to members of the team I was meeting for the first time, and when we broke for lunch, Greg Shea, the member of the installation team nominated to build my cabinet, pointed out a chryselephantine figure in the photograph on the front. He said that he had made one of these figures, and offered to go and get it. I wasn't really sure I had heard him correctly, but he disappeared for a long time, and eventually returned with a small box containing a little figure of a medieval huntsman in armour that he had made – cast in bronze, with the head and hands carved from recycled antique ivory. I asked if we might display this object as a (credited) curiosity in the final cabinet, and he agreed. Greg had trained as a silversmith, and his skill in making finely turned objects together with his practical, as well as aesthetic, attention to detail would become a defining aspect of our pairing to install the work together the following year.

Back in London, I submitted a detailed written specification, including all measurements and materials, providing the basis for the Yale team to prepare their production budget, plus my own budget for the

handcrafted elements I would produce for the installation in the UK. In February 2009 I returned to Yale for four days, by which point it was well established that I was planning to interpret the arrangements of natural history specimens, as well as the basic design, of Bonnier de la Mosson's cabinet. However, replicating the 18th-century display was by no means a straightforward proposition for the Peabody, where they work to established scientific protocols and contemporary standards of security and conservation, which –

as Spary examines in her paper – are not inclusive of the merits of decorative display. I was planning to exhibit a large number of specimens within a relatively limited space, with many attached to the outside of the cabinet – none of which must be allowed to touch another, for conservation purposes. For my final selection, every specimen became part of a process of negotiation concerning where it would ultimately be displayed. Specimens inside the cabinet – which it was established would be built to be secure and environmentally controlled – could be loaned from the museum's accessioned collections that I had been

viewing in the stores – where I made notes of accession numbers, dimensions, and location. Material to be displayed in the open would need to be matched, where available, from the extensive, scientifically less important and less formally systematised, handling collections – adding considerably to the process of location and retrieval for my colleagues at the Peabody. This was further complicated because during the project's lengthy research and development period the entire natural history collections were removed from the stores in the Peabody Museum building, where I had been viewing them, to a new campus on the western edge of the town. At the same time, the identification system was changed, rendering the accession numbers and locations I had noted in the old stores redundant.

Meanwhile, at Yale University Art Gallery, I was introduced to John Stuart Gordon, Curator of the Furniture Study in the Department of American Decorative Arts; and David Sensabaugh, Curator in the Department of Asian Arts who gave me access to the Gallery's online collections catalogue – where I selected 18th-century ceramics and Early European Decorative Arts appropriate to the collections of artefacts owned by Delany and the Duchess. It turned out that virtually all of the numerous ceramics I selected had never been exhibited since they were first donated to the Yale collections – some as long ago as the 1930s. Again, there were problems: of incomplete measurements, out of date accompanying information, and especially of location and retrieval. An email from one of my colleagues at the Center, who went to the Art Gallery stores to take missing measurements for me when I was in London, gives some indication of this – and also illustrates the way in which individual partners and their institutions picked up the creative spirit of the collaboration despite the challenges presented by my requests: "Just back from my trip [to the stores] and it was incredible. Everyone was wonderful and their interests in the exhibition seemed suddenly piqued by all the material being pulled.... They were extremely accommodating and the installation guys worked non-stop – it took them a total of 4 days to pull everything! I've never seen anything like it!"¹⁷

Presiding over all the complexities and challenges, taking day-to-day responsibility for diplomatic relations across the Atlantic, as well as between institutions, was Senior Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Elisabeth Fairman – who had volunteered to be Organising Curator for my installation, and Curatorial Assistant Bekah Dickstein. Their wholehearted, generous facilitation, enthusiastic support – and meticulous cataloguing, of hundreds of objects from across the science and arts collections, in limited time, merit a paper of their own.

At the end of my trip to Yale to present my designs, I met with Stephen at his studio in New York to go over my specifications in more detail for the built aspects of the installation – for which he would produce scale plans and elevations, as well as life-size plans specially for me that would facilitate matching measurements of objects I had selected to the display spaces I was considering for them. Back in London, it was finally possible for a meaningful contract to be drafted between the Center and myself, outlining a detailed proposal for the completion of the project. In April 2009, with four months to go before installing the work, a contract was signed with the Center, and I began producing quantities of shellflowers for the cabinet with the help of two volunteers and two work experience students.¹⁸ I also commissioned Geoff Portass to make moulds of delicate decorative items I had collected, the casts from which would feature within the installation in plaster; and in clay as decorations on the over-sized Portland Vase, that I would make in collaboration with ceramic artist Oriel Harwood in her studio in South London.



3. Vase before firing at Oriel Harwood's studio 2009

¹⁸ Lucy Ducker and Julianna G Lormonde. BA Technical Effects for Performance course, London College of Fashion and volunteers: Celia Carman and Sabine Maurer.

¹⁷ Email from assistant at Yale Center for British Art. 15.7.2009.

Returning to Yale for my fourth visit in June 2009, I spent nine days with the ever-expanding team. With a two-week installation period scheduled for the end of August, it had become a matter of urgency to enrol preparators from the Peabody to install the Vertebrate Zoology specimens. All the birds I had selected had been removed from their original 19th-century wooden perches in a cull some years previously – at the direction of a curator who deemed them to be of no scientific relevance – and they needed to be replaced. There were also numerous antlers and a stuffed armadillo to be installed high up on the outside of the cabinet. An emergency meeting was called with senior management and the Preparator at the Peabody, headed from the Center by Amy and Elisabeth, together with Rick Johnson, Head of the installation team, and Greg, who would build the cabinet – as a result of whose combined support and uncompromising commitment to the project, two preparators were specially engaged on a freelance basis to contribute to the installation process.

I was keen to replicate what appeared to be numerous turned wooden perches in the Bonnier de la Mosson cabinet, and I began tracking down anything that was turned in wood that might have potential as a stand, in antique markets in the UK and USA, emailing photos and dimensions to Greg and Susan Hochgraf, the preparator who would present the birds. I was confident that, working with reference to the Bonnier de la Mosson illustration, Greg and Susan would together find a successful way to perch the birds during our time together installing – based on my understanding of Greg's skill in making finely turned delicate objects, and Susan's knowledge of, and dexterity with, zoological specimens.

However, it soon became apparent – as the anxiety levels in emails from the Peabody increased – that this was a radical departure from scientific practice, in which detailed drawings would normally be provided in advance. In the end, though, Sue and Greg's combination of skills and sensitivity to the task brought perfect solutions. Together, they matched each bird to a stand that Greg could assemble from the bits and pieces I had gathered together. We still lacked little crossbars for the birds to sit on, and Greg generously suggested he could make some from his own recycled antique ebony and ivory. Showing me his first examples he asked if I would like him to make a hand? He returned next day with a miniature carved ivory forearm and hand, on which Sue delicately poised a tiny hummingbird.

During the two-week installation at the Center we were joined by Eric Lazo-Wasem, Senior Collection Manager of Invertebrate Zoology, and Museum Assistant Lourdes Rojas, who were in charge of corals and shells; Ray Pupedis, Senior Collection Manager of Entomology, who devised numerous exquisite exhibits of butterflies and moths with reference to the displays in the Bonnier de la Mosson illustration; and Susan Butts, Senior Collection Manager of Invertebrate Paleontology, keeping track of hundreds of little fossils to ensure they could all be accurately identified in the accompanying catalogue.



4. Friendship cabinet, detail
© Jane Wildgoose 2009

taken up our conversations about The Order of Things to present a wall display of Cornell drawers¹⁹ with explanatory labels, exploring evolving modes in the systematisation of natural history specimens, from the 18th-century to the present day. Finally, inspired by the illustration of Levinus Vincent's collection, Ray took the creative lead: presenting me with a stack of boxes containing pinned butterflies and moths from the handling collection, which he entrusted to me to put wherever I liked in the exhibition.

On the final installation day I asked Elisabeth, Greg, and Bekah to choose one specimen each and place it wherever they liked. We installed a moth Ray had selected to alight on a candle on the chandelier, and then I asked Greg, with his precision skills, to help me install a swarm of butterflies high up, on the flowers on the wallpaper I had selected to go on the wall opposite the Friendship cabinet. This was an idea I would not have dared to ask for, given the conservation and security issues – and it seems a perfect illustration with which to end: of the ways in which our conversations across disciplines, and between institutions, had enabled us, together, to test and redefine the potential of our individual and collective practice.



5. The Order of Things
© Jane Wildgoose 2009



6. Friendship cabinet
© Jane Wildgoose 2009

¹⁹ Standardised drawers for storing specimens in natural history museums.

Jeremy Theophilus & Barney Hare Duke

*The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes.
(Marcel Proust)*

We have been working together as a partnership of creative producers for the last nine years, developing and delivering a programme of international artists' residencies specialising in the exploration and expression of contemporary crafts practice.

We are intrigued by difference and challenged by the realities of making craft to live, rather than making craft to please. In as much as difference implies a pair of states, we have found ourselves working as pairs between cultures, exploring the possibilities for connections rather than similarities. Indeed we delight in the difference between, that space where one looks in both directions to fix one's own fluid state, like an anxious satnav.

Our ethos is built on the necessity for exchange between cultures, a mechanical balancing act with the ambition to move artists between countries in an equitable motion of fairness. Seeking to avoid being seen to be stepping into colonial footprints we have tried to walk at a different pace.

We started this journey with a project called HAT: Here and There, a structured programme of international exchange residencies for the crafts that has linked England with Australia, China, the Caribbean and, most especially, with South Asia. We have worked in a number of collaborative ways: with artists, craftspeople and artisans; between cultures, disciplines, economies and hierarchies; in museums, galleries, academic institutions and art centres.

In so doing we have developed a programme with three distinct but related strands that offer different ways of facilitating this process of engagement and that reflect our own increasingly meaningful relationship with India in particular. These are: the International Exchange Residency linking artists and arts organisations and academic institutions; our shared ownership and management of Arts Reverie as a special House for Artists in Ahmedabad, India; and the current programme, Material Response, facilitating makers responding to museums, their collections and their audiences. Each is dependent on developing new partnerships, creating and growing a 'family' of networks and participants.

The HAT (Here & There) exchange residency links two artists and two institutions across two countries for a period of three months for each artist whilst they undertake personal research in a state of displacement. It forms part of a programme of up to ten such exchanges, at whose completion all those involved come together for a week of discussion, workshops and networking. A website documents the programme with opportunities for each artist to upload diaries and images, and short films are commissioned as a means of creatively analysing and sharing the residency experience.

Arts Reverie is a haveli (townhouse) in the middle of the Old City of Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat. Built in a traditional style around an internal courtyard, it has accommodation for four guests/artists with a large top floor multi-purpose space and smaller places around the building for research and reverie. As important is the house's role as a focal point for activity both within the immediate neighbourhood and across and beyond the City, where visiting artists can build their own relationships with craftspeople, agencies and communities. Through this less formal process partnerships are created that can result in new product and new uses for traditional techniques. It fulfils the following functions:

- An artist's residency base from which inter/national artists can explore their own practice
- A creative House that facilitates interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue
- A specialist national centre — for the exploration of emerging new crafts practice
- A centre for an on-going partnership of exchange between the UK and India
- A catalyst for the re-activation of the historical cultural and commercial connection between Manchester and Ahmedabad

Material Response is an adaptation of the HAT model that has been tailored to fit with the objectives of two groups of museums participating in the Cultural Olympiad, as part of the Stories of the World programme. It enables partnerships to be established between museums in the UK and partner countries, and involves two/three-month residencies, commissions, curatorial visits, public programmes and critical evaluation.

A particular focus is on making the connection between collections and diaspora audiences, especially young people. In the East region, Norwich, Cambridge, Colchester & Ipswich and Luton are linked with India, China, The Bahamas and Pakistan respectively. In the North West the focus is on Greater Manchester and Lancashire and Ahmedabad and Gujarat and on the shared heritage and persistence of cotton production and trade as expressed by designers, artists and craftspeople.

As an example, we are focusing on the Luton/Karachi exchange. Luton Museums Trust run a transport museum in a town whose 20th century history is based on the manufacture of the Bedford truck and where there is a vibrant and well-established Pakistani diaspora. Pakistan is where many Bedford trucks became the canvas for artists whose work has become a recognisable element of the country's cultural identity. This part of South Asia is also where today's Romany are thought to have originated.

A leading truck artist from Karachi, Haider Ali, came to Luton in March of this year for a two month residency, after the UK artist Rory Coxhill had spent two months working with him in the truck yards. Rory is part Romany and a professional caravan painter. Together they worked on a 30 year-old Bedford truck sourced by Vauxhall Motors in Malta, and restored, rebuilt and re-decorated as a truck for Luton. Somewhere in deepest Suffolk there are also two decorated vans marking the Royal Wedding. This is only the beginning.....

Throughout the development of these projects we were responding initially to an expressed desire from artists in a neglected field for the opportunity to explore and extend their experience of practice between location and dislocation. The network of those involved created a space where this could be shared and made increasingly meaningful to a wider public.

In the research, developing, delivering and reviewing of these programme strands we have collectively set and measured tasks and posited many questions. In the process we have accumulated many more questions than answers, and have been asked many questions we have found it difficult to answer. One such question was posed by Salima Hashmi in Pakistan, who asked us:

"Is it not possible to look at the contemporary without using the lens of modernism?"

This elegant and very restrained retort to some rather clumsy positioning by fellow travellers on an earlier curatorial trip to Lahore has rung in our ears ever since. It serves as a warning to those who harbour preconceptions without the balance of an open mind, as well

as reminding us of the radically differing approaches to the practice of art in the face of global creep.

The questions are not new, they are the stuff of international collaboration, but they are pertinent, sharpened by the ferocity with which global events can impact on so many peoples' lives simultaneously. We have made many journeys, both physical and conceptual, marking that particular circular trajectory from theory through practice and experience back to theory.

This essential process of post-rationalising current programmes then gives us a meaningful position from which we can continue to collaboratively interrogate and inform contemporary craft practice.

The movements we initiate depend on difference: how then should we behave when that difference becomes eroded through a culture's development so as to make the journey less meaningful? To be mirrored by the 'excesses' of one's own culture? To see what is a reminder of one's own lost cultural practices being similarly neutered and discarded? And why do we continue to do it?

We may set out looking for something specific only to experience immense difference.

At the same time, the departure points for enquiry are as numerous as the individuals involved: the residual legacy of experience from the journey, as evidenced in both what is left behind and in what is packed in baggage to carry home, becomes the measurement of outcomes and impacts. These can be broadly located in four areas: economic, social, ethical and cultural. The terms under which artists enter these programmes will implicate them in being provoked, in being challenged in their place in the world, in confronting forgotten nostalgias, and in being forced to take moral and ethical decisions.

Furthermore, in a society that is increasingly multi-cultural, values are an integral part of an inter-cultural exchange that can be misunderstood or misinterpreted. How therefore is value (economic or cultural) sustained and communicated across cultures? Within the global superstore of made objects, craft, through its many guises represents the mark of the hand, known or unknown: the value of that imprint varies hugely.

Interest has led us by way of engagement (in the field) to intervention. Through partnership and collaboration we have found ourselves pursuing a search to construct an understanding of the contemporary across craft practice in South Asia and the UK, and to mark out an area where we can continue to explore its value and significance within cultural, social and economic contexts.

We have arrived at a new departure point for further

collaborative enquiry: to test what part we can play in being meaningful contributors in locating what we would define as 'expanded crafts practice' in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Expanded and extended craft practice is that area of art making, creating and imagining that sits in a space that is between disciplines, between the traditional and the contemporary; a meeting place of artists and artisan, where the gaps are narrowed and the edges of design and art loose validity, where conservation and preservation give way to change in perception and process where everything is on the move: producers, markets, uses and promoters.

Drawing on case studies from ten years of our own cultural practice, we will emphasise key factors that support our enquiry into locating this territory, and identify proposals for the direction of further travel with our partners within it.

David Gates

Abstract

This paper contends that much can be understood of the doing and experience of craft by attending to the situated language of practitioners.

The emerging discourses of contemporary craft practices have arguably been predicated upon a hegemony of critical and historical writing. (eg; Koplos 2002, Adamson 2007, Harrod 1999). I argue that in the strategy to gain cultural traction those who have written about craft have sought to establish, in Lyotard's terms a grand narrative. This is a result of craft being written about from dominant etic perspectives, generating a discourse that circulates a limiting set of agendas and tropes. It can be claimed that recurring themes such as cultural categories; 'locating craft', technologies; from hand-making to the digital, and modernity; crafts relationship to contemporary social paradigms have constituted much of the explications of craft in the past two decades (see Greenhalgh's analysis P1-16, 2002), and that these largely reflect the concerns of Art History and Material Culture. Writings centred on the experience of the maker have privileged the model of biography – life story telling – and hence recall and historical testament. This methodology is often reflected in the growing interest in oral histories of working lives. (for example, Recording the Crafts), whilst the everyday concerns of makers are often characterised as an overstated interest in matters of technique and process, 'talking about kiln temperatures' (Greenhalgh, 2007).

We might consider such a grand narrative as a construct of series of pivotal events, significant works, claim and counter claim assembled after the event as a venture of reflection and post-rationalisation.

This paper makes the claim that the unremarked and unrecorded mutterings of the now are as significant as the remembered pivotal event. In attending to the situated everyday professional talk of crafts practitioners we might find alternative expositions of practice. As a metaphor we might think in terms of the maquette or sketch as being as significant in understanding creative practice as the exhibited final artefact.

Drawing on methodologies emanating from ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, Street & Brice Heath 2008) and sociolinguistics (Duranti 1997, Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995) it can be shown that attending to small stories in interaction (Georgakopoulou, 2007) can broaden our understanding of the lived in experience of doing craft.

Using extracts from recordings of situated 'in studio'

conversation of craft makers this paper seeks to reveal the role of talk in constructively doing things (Austin 1955). That, far from talking about 'kiln temperatures' the situated talk of studio practice reveals a sophisticated inter-disciplinary communicative nexus of narrative, identity-formation and meaning-making.

Adamson, G. (2007) *Thinking Through Craft*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Austin, J. (1955) *How to do things with words*.

Duranti, A. (1997) *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne. Cambridge University Press.

Georgakopoulou, A. (2007) *Small Stories, Interaction and Identities (Studies in Narrative)* London, John Benjamins.

Greenhalgh, P. (ed.) (2002) *The Persistence of Craft*. London: A&C Black.

Hammersley, P. & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography, Principles in Practice*. London and New York, Routledge.

Harrod, T. (1999) *The Crafts in Britain in The Twentieth Century*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Johnson, J. (ed.) (2002) *Exploring Contemporary Craft; History, Theory and Critical Writing*. Coach House Books.

Recording the Crafts. <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/rtc/> accessed March 2013.

Widdicombe, S. & Wooffitt, R. (1995) *The Language of Youth Subcultures*. Harvester Wheatsheaf.

David delivered the full version of this paper at the Pairings conference in May 2011. The conference offered a valuable platform to discuss some of the ideas that it contained. Shortly after David was invited by Bloomsbury to submit a chapter for a volume edited by Linda Sandino and Matthew Partington. Ideas and themes upon which this paper was predicated were developed, and brought into sharper focus in subsequent work on that chapter.

You can link to that book here;

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/oral-history-in-the-visual-arts-9780857852007/>

Leave the laptop at home: the collaborative project Department 21 at the Royal College of Art'

Stephen Knott

The content of the talk will be focused around Department 21 an interdisciplinary and collaborative project started at the Royal College of Art in Autumn 2009 in which I participated. The project is ongoing, with a recent stint at the Islington Mill Art Academy. I will explain the project and its outcomes as an example of collaborative practice at an art school, including my experience of it as a researcher by thesis in the first few months of its existence.

Being a holder of an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award entitled 'Modern craft: history, theory and practice' between RCA and V&A with supervisor (GA) who guided the academic content and historical stuff and Hans Stofer, head of GSM&J who has always encouraged me to think about non-written, visual means of communicating my key research questions.

Coming out of the first year I was studying the phenomenon of diy and its history, and through my affiliation with the RCA how it is used today. Within this context Hans said that I should spend a term where I forget about researching, going to library, reading etc..., leave the laptop at home and spend time in his department, involved in the Autumn term project for the Marzee galleries in Nijmegen.

I made bumbling efforts within the department with the mediums they were using – metal, etc – using manuals (slide). Being an MA course there were no skill-based courses in anything other than in the really complex machinery, so I was left to the kindness of students to advise me. I eventually explored my interest in kits, that derived from my historical research, which I then applied to the brief for the Marzee project with was about the overcoat as a means of display. Instead of making a kit of an overcoat (too difficult) I made one of a coathanger which I gave to some students to complete for me.

The experience of getting involved in the department was less a skill-building exercise, more a realization that to make anything I had to rely on others – other students, technicians, advise of friends, supervisors. It wasn't about me becoming a craftsman in the sense described by Richard Sennett in his recent book *The Craftsman* – being at one with the material in the (spiritual) symbiosis of hand and head – or like Peter Dormer's tuition in calligraphy and sculpture as a part of his PhD investigation on skill and transfer of craft knowledge, which was later to become the influential book *Art of the Maker*. Craft, or making, became about realising that for me to make anything I had to rely on

everything else outside of me, the tools as well as the people.

D21

While I was in the GSM&J department a group of MA students at the college were proposing to set up a collaborative interdisciplinary space within the college called Dept 21, the 21st department that welcomed students from all the 20 other departments with an explicit open-door policy.

THE IDEA

The idea was to 'work beyond the institutional boundaries of their own disciplines', with each participant taking responsibility for taking a position in regard to their own learning. The new rector of the RCA, Paul Thompson was suitably impressed and allowed students to run a studio in a building that was being vacated by painting students – with a small budget.

It was one floor of painting studios, but dept 21 re-designed the cramped corridors by opening up the space converting the temporary walls into tables and chairs.

The opening night of the project invited people to make furniture for the month ahead using remnants of what was there before. A kit on an architectural scale. 'Take a seat'

A neat metaphor, the walls that divided painting students, now used for table and chairs by students all over the College, interested in collaboration.

COLLABORATIVE LABOUR

After a successful opening of the space (where everyone knew how to act) the issue about (everyday activity) content arose – what was this collaborative labour meant to achieve? What outcomes would arise? Would it be sufficient just to exist there? With pressure to produce an output, what would that be?

The space was gradually being claimed by various people. This was not the de-territorialisation of disciplinary boundaries, more the displacement of students interested in the project to the confines of another building where there was a compulsion to share. The openness of the brief meant people did not leave their

tools behind. This was when I brought back my laptop!

In one way this open plan environment meant that it was hard to work at all shy of other people seeing what you do collective noise not good for just getting on with personal work/especially reading and writing, but good for collaborative events – meetings, workshops etc.

First workshop GSMJ workshop

Quite simply this workshop was about joining together in groups to make something to bring to a dinner party at the end of the day.

Describe the table our group made. Modification of the large table Make use of the large gap in the middle of the communal table. Serving implements, tools.

Describe the Rube Goldberg type wine dispenser. A better way of serving wine, according to one of the makers, for its ability to make sure three people drink together at the same time.

The workshop was hardly revolutionary – no political polemic, no manifesto, yet it was a chance to employ collaborative labour towards a common goal, a way of achieving distance from your specialist subject and employing whatever skills were to hand to contribute.

Like those who made the chairs in the opening night, the workshop and further workshops (slide Claytime) reminded participants of their abilities to manipulate materials all around them. And without the pressure of these products being the work of any one individual (it didn't belong to anyone) there was more of a sense of play in direct response to a very open brief.

If briefs in the art school are meant to encourage creative response, there is equal pressure on students to conform to the idea of solving briefs by themselves, playing by the rules of single authorship that helps produce 'industry-ready' students at the end of the course. Competitiveness triumphs over play.

Like the wine dispenser, play can be silly, there is not much functional efficiency to this object, and it is not the appropriation of the vernacular. This type of folly does not befit an industry where creation of an artistic identity and name for yourself is a serious business.

But students who participated in the GSMJ workshop happily played enjoying picking up different tools, forgetting about their specialism and meeting people from other departments. This was praise that was common to the Department 21 project as a whole. Students appreciated the space to think outside the

rigour of their disciplinary boundaries. There are plenty of other examples of how play and the adoption of a different set of tools has been used to rejuvenate practice.

If you are thinking about how this optimistic view has the whiff of the Downing Street Rose Garden – all smiles, but with an underlying tension – I would agree. This could easily be seen as just a coterie of art-students justifying a party and the spending of money for food and wine.

Within the comfort of the art school collaborative labour, learning a new set of skills and finding a meditative space from the norms of one's practice doesn't sound that difficult – it sounds like the break out spaces in the offices of Google, where workers can go to refresh themselves and have even less excuse to be unhappy, unproductive workers when they are busy programming, designing and exercising their labour. PLUS art students have a pre-aptitude for transferring their skills in between mediums. Picking up a plane when your used to scissors and thread is not that much of a jump – just compare the fear of tools for making that many d-i-y beginners first feel is not there.

But to its credit, Department 21 never claimed to be anything other than an open collaborative space, so if people just wanted a rest from their own studio space they were welcome (there was some sleeping if I recall). There was no compulsion to follow a particular strategy, plan or manifesto; no didacted heavily guided curation. Stating an entrance requirement, rules or whatever would constitute putting up the walls of the painting studio that has so symbolically been torn down at the beginning. Something to dip in and out of every now and then.

This openness however was not always conducive to collaborative labour (more my interest than theirs) – most people did not 'leave behind' their tools and instead transplanted their normal studio equipment into the temporary space. This meant collaboration was confined to the odd couple teaming up here and there, but was most seen in the many roundtable events, talks and evening meals that were planned with much ceremony.

The food was fantastic, reflecting the cultural mix in the department, and also due to the fact we weren't allowed to cook there was lots of fresh healthy stuff

But once again the openness of the project seemed to work against Department 21 – surely cooking, drinking and socialising like this already was a form of collaborative labour that could take place anywhere else in the College. There was a sense that Department 21 was asking for space that was actually fulfilling the

same function of the café, canteen or bar. A place to socialise, interact between departments. Why have a space for department 21 when the activities it promotes happen anyway?

In summary collaborative labour worked best when College students of Dept 21 worked with people invited from outside of the College, meaning events were less likely to feel like a single college or departmental fraternity.

Also, making obvious the feeling of having to rely on someone else in making something (rather than it being the product of your own genius) seems key to an understanding both collaborative labour and craft processes.

Department 21 as soft critique

One of the key aspects of the project was to provide a critique of existing art school education structure at the College, which in department 21 never had the tone of resistance and 'anti', more parasitical in the sense that it wanted to live off the body of the main institution (the RCA) whilst agitating the main institution, probably through critique rather than contamination! There definitely was the sense of working with, rather than against.

Towards this end the ROUNDTABLE was the key object. All of Department 21's meetings and discussions were around a roundtable that gave equal position for each participant. Of course, invited speakers were given more time to speak (and sometimes even a distance between them and other participants occurred).

For example

When artists Michael Rakowitz and Carey Young came for a discussion at department 21 after a lecture at the College. To have the discussion that every wanted but couldn't have in the lecture theatre.

Amateurism event – 5 speakers and a 1 hour discussion afterwards!

A democratic approach to discussion

This is why I think the activation of gallery space by D21 is perhaps more successful. Being an appendage to the RCA Graduation Show means that it can be at one remove from the mass of practice, a collaborative space at odds with the rampant individualism going on inside, with people promoting their own work. It takes the pressure off trying to create something out of nothing in studio space and concerns education models that are accessible to passers by both inside and outside college.

Also, reflects the spatial flexibility and parasitical nature of the project – similar to the initial cart.

This stress on anti-individualism seems apparent when D21 spent time at the Islington Mill Academy – a break from normal individual work to thinking about making a collective statement.

Of course, the 'collaborative' nature of D21 could be just seen as a badge of honour for its participants, once again feeding individualism, but as long as it keeps its open door to anyone then it does the best it can. 'The inter-disciplinary' tag.

One instance in which limits were imposed was in the production of this publication. The design team for the book asked for content from all – so open access – but all the pages of the book had a similar format. Probably makes it a better designed book but one idea that I was hoping to propose was a messy article about amateurism that floated off the page and was thus not able to be fully read. This was not allowed by the designer – his specialism in design (which was good) blocked any ability to produce something more chaotic.

So the project continues and still mulls over what is the definition of inter-disciplinarity is and collaboration through picking up different tools. It has a space in the next RCA show.

A great barometer for this type of practice is provided by Roland Barthes, who was quoted in the first public meeting held by D21 and lingered in the back of my head as a critical benchmark throughout my time there.

'Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let itself go). To do something interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a 'subject' (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one'.

Pairings Conference Biographies

Manchester Metropolitan University



MANCHESTER
SCHOOL OF ART



Alke Gröppel-Wegener

Originally from Germany, Alke Gröppel-Wegener has made her home in the North-West of England where she graduated as a Performance Designer from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and has completed two post-graduate degrees at Manchester Metropolitan University: a MPhil on museum and theme park design and a PhD on the role of writings in undergraduate education in the UK. She currently is a part-time Senior Lecturer in Contextual Studies at Staffordshire University, where she focuses on study skills for art and design students and Animation Studies, as well as working as a freelance designer and researcher.

Alke joined the Pairings Project in the autumn of 2009 as 'collator' and writer, which has led her to not only editing the catalogue, but also to a new research interest in the use of blogging strategies in art and design education.. Her next research project will explore the use of handling collections in Higher Education.

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Alice Kettle

Alice Kettle is Senior Research Fellow MIRIAD, Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University. She instigated the on-going Pairings project with Alex McErlain in 2008 and together with Helen Felcey has organised the Pairings Conversations, Collaborations, Materials conference. This was a direct response to various collaborative projects she has undertaken, the first being Place Settings with Helen Felcey in 2006. Her work is represented in various public collections such as the Crafts Council London, the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, the Museo Internazionale delle Arti Applicate Oggi, Turin, Italy. Recent exhibitions include, The Narrative Line, a 2 person show at the National Gallery, Crafts Council of Ireland, Telling Fortunes solo show at Platt Hall Gallery of Costume, Manchester and

Allegory solo touring show with collaborative pieces with Stephen Dixon hosted by the Crafts Study Centre UCA Farnham.

The volume Machine Stitch Perspectives which she has edited with Jane McKeating was published by A&C Black in August 2010. This book features contributions from colleagues at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is also currently Visiting Professor at the Centre for Real World Learning University of Winchester.

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David Gates

A winner of the Jerwood Award for Contemporary Making 2010 Gates's practice draws together a multi-stranded approach to design and making. His furniture embraces functional expediency as well as exploring our relationship with the stuff around us. Carefully made bespoke cabinet-work and tables sit alongside rapidly made, seemingly functionless, intuited pieces, at a distance yet connected. It at once both celebrates and interrogates making techniques, neither fetishising nor negating either hand or machine. Gates is a founder member of the collective, Intelligent Trouble, a cross-disciplinary project exploring social production.

His M/Phil PhD research at Kings College London focuses on the situated language of craft practice and he is a senior lecturer at London Metropolitan University. Recent exhibitions include; Taking Time; Craft and the Slow Revolution, (2009-11) Intelligent Trouble at Contemporary Applied Arts (2010), Jerwood Contemporary Makers, (2010-11), Starting Points at the Siobhan Davies Dance Studios (2010) and Host, San Francisco (2011).

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Jane Webb

Jane Webb studied anthropology and art history, undertaking her PhD in the relationship between design philosophy and British Radical 19th century politics. While undertaking this research she became involved with the Design Transformation Group, a collective of designers, theorists and artists who explored ideas about creativity. This led on to an interest in the relationships between theory and practice and she now works closely with artists and makers.

She is currently teaching on the Contemporary Art History degree at Manchester Metropolitan University and is researching the collections at the Costume Gallery, Platt Hall, Manchester, for a series of books for Bloomsbury (A and C Black).

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Jason Cleverly

Jason Cleverly is Course leader BA Contemporary Crafts at University College Falmouth, he also designs and makes interactive sculptural craft works, exhibiting nationally and internationally.

For some time he has developed a series of site-specific and interpretive interactive artefacts for museums and art gallery collections, designed to engender collaboration and co-participation, to enhance informal learning. Many of these projects have been developed in close collaboration with social scientists at King's College London. He recently completed an interactive exhibit for Doctor Johnson's House London to celebrate John-

son's tercentenary, working closely with a Learning technologist Tim Shear. Jason specialises in helping students with their design development from ideas generation to evolution, as well as the ways in which their work can be displayed and interpreted by an audience. Increasingly the practice and research elements of his work pervade the student projects he undertakes with external partners, including significant and innovative collaborations with museums.

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Francesca Baseby

Francesca Baseby is an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award student at the University of Edinburgh and Dovecot Studios. Investigating the question 'How have a wide range of artists responded to the opportunity to design tapestries for Dovecot Studios?', the project aims to examine the nature of Dovecot's collaborative activities. The studio has woven designs by a number of artists, from Graham Sutherland to David Hockney, and more recently for an installation by Claire Barclay. The final thesis will focus on the varied nature of different collaborative tapestry commissions in the post-war period and the ways in which artists responded to this. The research will feed into a major centenary exhibition in 2012, curated by Dr Elizabeth Cumming. Other research interests include: modern interdisciplinary artistic practices, twentieth-century textile design, contemporary weaving and knitting and the Islamic decorative arts.

Prior to beginning her PhD, Francesca worked as Gallery Manager at Dovecot, a contemporary arts venue which is home to the tapestry studio. Projects included co-curating a 50th Anniversary Exhibition on author and illustrator John Burningham, curating a celebration of twenty years of the Alastair Salvesen Art Scholarship, and coordinating a number of visiting exhibitions including Henry Moore Textiles. A keen knitter and Agatha Christie fan, Francesca was recently interviewed for the BBC's Culture Show special, 'The Books We Really Read'.

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Barbara Hawkins

Barbara Hawkins is Director for Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of West of England (UWE). She was previously a producer of educational broadcasts for the BBC, before moving into a full-time academic career as a lecturer in Film at the Bournemouth & Poole College of Art and Design. Based at UWE since 1999 she has taught numerous courses in film and media. Her experimental film and live performance event 'Where do we go from here', in collaboration with jazz composer and musician Andy Sheppard, broke new ground in film narrative structure and technical innovation. She co-founded 'Project

Dialogue' with Brett Wilson four years ago at UWE with the aim of exploring research and educational synergies across the arts and sciences.

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Brett Wilson

Brett Wilson recently retired as Professor of Electronics & Communications after an academic career spanning the Universities of Manchester, Sheffield Hallam, UMIST, Nottingham and Baghdad. He has published over 100 scientific papers and a research textbook and held visiting appointments in several countries, as well as a number of government and industrial consultancies. For the last 4 years he has

been a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of West of England (UWE) undertaking the role of part-time 'scientist in residence'. He co-founded, with Barbara Hawkins, the transdisciplinary research project at UWE, 'Project Dialogue'.

Rhian Solomon

Rhian Solomon is a Visual Artist whose practice is concerned with drawing parallels between skin and cloth. Extensive cross-disciplinary research underpins much of her work, which has culminated in informal & formal experimental collaborations between medical and textile professionals. Current research interests now focus on the potential for knowledge transfer between the realms of Pattern Cutting for Fashion and Plastic Surgery. These collaborations are manifested through works by the artist combining materials and processes to

create gallery-based installations, research projects and interactive academic & audience-facing workshops. Solomon is Artist in Residence at The University for the Creative Arts and is a visiting lecturer for a number of HE institutions including Manchester Metropolitan University and The Royal College of Art.

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Dr Jill Fernie-Clarke

Jill studied Art and Art History at various institutions in Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Leeds and completed a PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2003. For the last nineteen years she has taught Critical and Contextual Studies on a wide range of FE and HE programmes. From 2004-8 Jill was programme leader for Blackpool's MA Visual Design as Creative Practice (validated by Lancaster University). She has worked independently as a consultant, and as Director of the Arts Council funded Blackpool Vistas project whilst

continuing to teach part-time in the School of Arts, Media and Education at the University of Bolton. Jill is currently Research Co-ordinator at Leeds College of Art her current research interests include building communities of practice and interdisciplinary approaches to representations of the 'excluded'.

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Brass Art

Brass Art are Chara Lewis, Kristin Mojsiewicz and Anneké Pettican. They have worked together on collaborative projects since 1999, exhibiting internationally and nationally. Brass Art explore real space and virtual space by positioning themselves as drawings, shadows, digital doubles and performers. Sometimes they seek privileged vantage points from which they can oversee the architecture of the city; occasionally they trespass; or occupy seemingly inaccessible realms. Central to this is their examination of the gap between public and private experience, and of thresholds or liminal spaces – “the blurred and flickering temporal space of the imagination and the actuality of contemporary life.”

Brass Art work collaboratively on large-scale drawings, video work, photography, 3D prints and shadow-play installations.

Recent solo exhibitions include *The Non-existence of the Unnamed*, *The International 3*, *Skyscraping*, *Yorkshire Sculpture Park*, and *Here and Elsewhere*, *Globe City*, *Newcastle*.

They have been selected for *ArtFutures*, *Bloomberg Space*, *London* and the *Jerwood Drawing Prize* (2008).

They were also Finalists in the *Experimental Media Series*, *WPA*, *Washington, U.S.A.*

Their work has been exhibited at *VOLTA 5 Basel*, *Preview Berlin*, *ZOO Art Fair* and the *Manchester Contemporary*.

They were recently commissioned by *Meadow Arts* to create new installations at *Croft Castle*, *Hereford, UK*.

Recent presentations of their collaborative practice include *ISEA:RUHR 2010*, *Dortmund, Germany*; the *Light Reading Series*, *No.w.here*, *London* in conversation with *Coline Milliard*; and *Upgrade!* at *Dundee Contemporary Arts for New Media Scotland*.

Future projects and collaborations include:

Dark Matters - International group show, *The Whitworth Gallery*, 2011.

Flights of Fancy - *Tatton Park Biennial*, curated by *Danielle Arnaud* and *Jordan Kaplan*, 2012.

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Simon Taylor

Simon Taylor has experience as a professional artist (contemporary ceramics) and has taught in schools and colleges in the South East, working with a wide range of students including children with special needs, prisoners and young offenders. Since 2004 his role has been Education and Community Outreach Manager for crafts development agency *The Making*, based in *Hampshire*.

In 2009 he helped to launch a new action research and education programme to bring craft and design directly into British schools.

Skills in the Making, supported by the *Paul Hamlyn Foundation*, is designed to improve the level of craft and design knowledge amongst school teachers. It is a professional development programme which enables art, design and craft teachers and trainees to meet some of the UK's leading makers, find out about their work and

explore the value of learning through making. This knowledge will in turn be passed on to their pupils and could help improve the standards of craft and design education in British schools. Artists involved in the programme include highly respected figures such as metalwork artist *Junko Mori*, ceramist *Kate Malone* and *Jerwood Prize* winner *Caroline Broadhead*.

Simon has a MA in *Museums and Galleries in Education* from the *Institute of Education* (*University of London*) and a BA (Hons) in three-dimensional design (*Wood, Metal, Ceramics and Plastics*) from the *University of Brighton*.

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Rachel Payne

I am a Senior Lecturer in Art Education at Oxford Brookes University; my responsibilities include Subject Leader for the Secondary Art/Design PGCE and the Programme Leader for the Artist Teacher Scheme Certificate in Advanced Educational Practice (CAEP) partnered with Modern Art Oxford, and the MA in Education (Arts). Within these programmes I have an opportunity to engage with a diverse partnership of practitioners, teachers, schools and visual arts organisations, with the aim to challenge art trainees and teachers to deliver innovative and relevant pedagogy to their pupils. The Oxford Brookes partnership with The Making is one such collaboration aiming to address gaps in craft based CPD for UK art teachers through developing subject knowledge, and building confidence to initiate new approaches to classroom practice.

Through the MA programme I have devised opportunity for art teachers to improve their professional practice and engage in research-led inquiry within their learning community, developed through educational research and visual practice. My longer term aim is to build a more cohesive art education learning community for all levels

of education across a wider partnership built on academic discourse as well as sharing effective practice and research. Currently undertaking an Educational Doctorate, my research interest is in visual enquiry and visual methodology within educational research. In keeping with art pedagogy, my preferred research methods involve the combination of how the visual is constructed, with meaning making through visual interpretation and perception. How the visual and research inquiry combine to enhance meaning is of particular interest, especially when considered within its socio-cultural context. During my academic career at Oxford Brookes University I have engaged in high profile consultancy including contracts for the Labour Government, Arts Council England and contribute to consultancy for The Stephen Lawrence Trust.

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Stephanie Boydell

Stephanie Boydell is a Curator at MMU Special Collections at Manchester Metropolitan University. She has an MA in Heritage Studies and has worked in the museum and gallery sector for over 10 years. Recent projects and exhibitions include: 'A Japanese Passion: the pottery of Edward Hughes'; 'Art School! Historic Perspectives/Contemporary Reflections'; 'Firing Thoughts: the relationship between ceramics and drawing' and 'Ravillious in Print'.

Stephanie was involved with the Pairings Project since its inception and has had organisational and curatorial responsibility for the Pairings exhibition.

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Elle Reynolds

Elle Reynolds has 25 years experience of teaching and management in Art and Design. Currently she is employed as Course Director for the Foundation Degree (FdA) Fine Art Skills & Practices course at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design (CSM), located within the Byam Shaw School of Art and leads the Diploma in Professional Practice a separate qualification offered to CSM BA Fine Art.

From an initial training in three dimensional works, her practice has developed around a broad approach to photo etching and screen-printing, with a distinct

reference to the materials and surfaces on which images are placed. Since completing a theoretical MA in History of Art & Architecture she has been researching issues around the object in landscape. This work is developing with key themes of absence, presence, surveillance, story telling and embellishment. She is also collaborator and member of the artist group MOSS.

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Lesley Millar

Lesley Millar has been a practising weaver with her own studio between 1975 – 2003. Her work is in the permanent collections of both The Crafts Council and Arts Council England and she was listed on the Crafts Council Index of Selected Makers. She has exhibited throughout the UK, in Europe, the USA and Japan.

She has worked as an exhibition organiser and curator specialising in contemporary textiles since 1987 and has been project director for 5 major international touring exhibitions featuring textile artists from the UK and Japan: 'Revelation' (1996-98), 'Textural Space' (2001), 'Through the Surface' (2003-05), '21:21 – the textile vision of Reiko Sudo and NUNO' (2005-07), 'Cloth & Culture Now' (2008). Her latest exhibition 'Cultex' featured collaborative partnerships between Norwegian and Japanese textile artists, and toured England, Norway and Japan between 2009-11. Her current project is in collaboration with Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and takes as its theme the relationship between lace net-works and space. The exhibition will open in the Gas Hall at the Museum in Birmingham in October 2011 and will tour during 2012.

She writes regularly about textile practice in Britain and Japan, including a monograph on Chiyoko Tanaka and is co-editor of the on-line textile journal DUCK. In 2006-07 she undertook a major AHRC funded research project investigating approaches to contemporary textiles

through collaborative research between Museums, HEI's and Practitioners.

In 2005 she was appointed Director of the Anglo Japanese Textile Research Centre at the University for the Creative Arts, in 2007 was appointed Professor of Textile Culture and currently has 4 PhD students and is lead tutor for the MA in textiles. In 2008 she received the Japan Society Award for significant contribution to Anglo-Japanese relationships.

www.transitionandinfluence.com

Professor of Textile Culture and Director of the Anglo Japanese Textile Research Centre, University for the Creative Arts, UK. She is a curator and writer specialising in contemporary textiles and, since 1996, Project Director for 5 major touring exhibitions featuring textile artists from the UK and Japan. In 2008 she received the Japan Society Award for significant contribution to Anglo-Japanese relationships. Her current project develops the relationship between lace and space. The exhibition will open in the UK November 2011.

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Dan Russel

I co-founded the multi-disciplinary group Manchester Municipal Design Corporation during the MA Design LAB at Manchester School of Art and am now a frequent Ultimate Holding Company collaborator. I was trained in architecture but now work across graphic design, socially focused art projects and making things happen.

Both the MMDC and UHC operate out of Hotspur House in the centre of Manchester, and are heavily involved in the establishment of an experimental collaborative space that spans university and professional practice on the 4th Floor of the building.

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Dan's blog

Twitter @DanDidThis

Manchester Municipal Design Corporation

@M_M_D_C

The Fourth Floor

@Fourth_Floor

Brave New Alps

Brave New Alps are communication designer who investigate into the cultural value of design and its capacity to question our surrounding realities. Their practice is focused upon developing a careful and exact evaluation of the cultural conditions surrounding a given project. The design process resulting from this in depth analysis aims at creating a situation or an object, which actively suggests, and promotes a change in modes of thinking about, and operating within the identified conditions.

In 2005 Bianca Elzenbaumer and Fabio Franz started to work together as Brave New Alps. In 2006, they

graduated from the Faculty of Design and Art of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano in Italy. In 2007 Bianca gained a Postgraduate Certificate in International Peacekeeping and Conflict Management from the Faculty of Educational Science of the University of Bologna. In July 2010, they both graduated from a 2 year MA in Communication Art & Design at the Royal College of Art in London. Bianca is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Design Department of Goldsmiths College in London.

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Jai Redman

"Jai Redman is an artist, activist and the creative director of Ultimate Holding Company (UHC) — a Manchester based studio of visual artists and designers developing collective, creative approaches to social, environmental and geographical entrenchment, isolation and enclosure.

Jai has spent over a decade on ecological and

social justice direct action campaigns in the UK, experience which continues to inform his personal art projects like 'This is Camp X Ray' and 'ExtInked'."

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Sharon Blakey

Sharon Blakey is a Senior Lecturer in Three Dimensional Design at Manchester Metropolitan University and a practicing ceramist who exhibits in the UK and abroad. Her work commemorates the mundane, the familiar and the obsolete, celebrating the stories that are imbued in the ordinary artefacts we live with.

Sharon is passionate about supporting learning through direct engagement with materials and has presented at a number of national conferences around this issue. She has delivered a variety of workshops for primary school children at Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 levels. She has also run short courses for Key Stage 3 secondary school pupils and Continuing Professional

Development courses for teachers.

Her current research project, Mary, Mary Quite Contrary, in collaboration with Manchester Art Gallery, investigates the Mary Greg Collection of Handicrafts of Bygone Times. The project aims is to reveal the value of this dormant, historic collection and it's collector, Mary Greg, whilst also seeking ways in which the collection can be used to engage a contemporary audience. The project culminates in an exhibition at Platt Hall Museum of Costume in the autumn of 2012.

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Liz Mitchell

Freelance museum interpretation consultant (previously Interpretation Development Manager at Manchester City Galleries) Until April of this year, I was Interpretation Development Manager at Manchester City Galleries. My job focused on the point of connection between people and objects, investigating ways in which museums and galleries can facilitate, share and develop meaningful encounters with the collections in our care. Over an 18 year period I worked across collections management and public engagement roles, initially as Documentation Assistant, later Decorative Art Curator (specialising in historic and contemporary ceramics), before becoming Online Gallery Manager and then Interpretation Development Manager in 2007. This range of experience gave me significant insight into the complex and often contradictory relationship between the dual roles of museums: audience engagement and collections preservation.

I am still struck, on a daily basis, by the depth and

significance of meaning that objects can hold for people, meaning that often extends far beyond the curatorial knowledge and expertise we hold as professionals. My particular interest lies in the relationship between historical knowledge and the potency of objects to inspire imagination, creativity and self-knowledge, and how as museums we can bring these different aspects of understanding together in order to understand the value of the collections in our care. I left Manchester City Galleries this year in order to pursue a freelance career specialising in museum interpretation and to combine this with a return to academic study, focusing on the history and cultures of collecting, with particular relation to Mary Greg and her contribution to British museum culture.

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Jane Wildgoose

Jane Wildgoose works across a range of disciplines exploring narratives that become attached to remains of all kinds. Seamlessly assimilating eclectic selections of objects with specially devised handiwork she presents site-specific interpretations of the past that make a strong appeal to the senses and the imagination, informed by detailed research and a thorough knowledge of the history of collecting. As Keeper of her own collection, The Wildgoose Memorial Library (WML), she presides over an ever-evolving 'memory theatre' of evocative found and made objects, documents, photographs, and books; working to commission with high-profile public and private collections in the UK and USA (Sir John Soane's Museum, London; the Portland Collection, Welbeck; Yale University) she brings long experience of leading and participating in ambitious collaborative projects to her close working relationships with curators and collection managers.

Wildgoose's scholarly - though poetic - hunter-gatherer approach has brought commissions to co-devise/present broadcasts for BBC Radio, write essays to accompany exhibitions, and publish articles/reviews in the national and specialist press. She has taken an active part in

debate about ethics concerning human remains in collections, and was commissioned as artist in residence/consultant by the Natural History Museum, London, to report on their human remains collections following changes to law relating to them.

Wildgoose is a NESTA Dreamtime Fellow, and was a Museummaker selected maker in 2010. She received a Wellcome Sciart R&D Award, in 2001, as project co-ordinator and artist/researcher/writer, in collaboration with a consultant gastroenterologist and an opera director. She has been co-recipient of a number of awards from the Arts Council including a National Touring Project Award for the Sciart project (2002/03), and two 'Year of the Artist' Awards in collaboration with fellow artists (2001). She is an experienced lecturer, tutor, and mentor to mid-career artists.

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Dr Faith Kane

Faith is a Lecturer in Textiles and chair of the Textiles Research Group at The School of the Arts, Loughborough University. The group is committed to understanding and progressing textiles practice and research through a diverse range of traditional and non-traditional approaches rooted in a fundamental understanding and core knowledge of materials and specialist processes. It is dedicated to encouraging dialogue and collaboration between practitioners using traditional and new technologies, the industrial sector, textile engineering and other textile and non-textile related art and design areas.

Since completing her PhD (Designing nonwovens: industrial and craft perspectives, 2008) - which focused on the construction of novel nonwovens engineered specifically for a range of decorative finishing processes

– Faith has developed this work within the framework of sustainable design looking to incorporate sustainable fibres and processing techniques and design concepts. Alongside this she has been working collaboratively across academic disciplines and with external organisations in the area of laser processing textiles. She takes an interdisciplinary approach to research which utilizes the conventions textiles design, craft and materials science. As such her work is situated at technology/art/design interface. Faith has published, exhibited and presented in the areas of nonwovens, laser processing and sustainable design.

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Tim Shear

Tim Shear is a Learning Technologist in the new Academy for Innovation and Research at University College Falmouth. His current technical explorations are focused around open source technologies, physical environmental interactions and calm interfaces.

Recent work includes a miniature digital sculpture 'Landscapecutter' part of InsideOut, a touring exhibition premiering at the Object Gallery, Sydney, Australia, 2010.

Stephen Knott

Stephen Knott is the holder of the third AHRC-funded 'Modern Craft: History, Theory and Practice' collaborative Royal College of Art/Victoria and Albert Museum studentship, researching for his thesis entitled 'Amateur craft practice in modernity'. After completing a BA in History at University College London he was awarded his MA in European History at the same institution in 2008, which had a particular focus on the theory of history and visual culture in late nineteenth century France. His background is in history, social relations in artistic production and modernity and in his PhD he is exploring the much-maligned phenomenon of amateur practice, developing

concepts and terminology that can be applied to historical case study.

The collaborative nature of the PhD has meant that he has worked in the RCA's applied arts department, introducing research concepts to practitioners and engaging in interdisciplinary projects including cross-departmental seminars in object analysis. This has participated in exhibitions including the display of twenty paint-by-number paintings at the RCA Research exhibition in October 2010.

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Joe McCullagh

Joe McCullagh is Head of Design at the Manchester School of Art. His career to date has been equally within design and education. He has been a graphic design consultant in a number of companies in both the public and private sectors and set up his own graphic design company in 1992. Joe's research interests are in

pedagogic international and cross-cultural design education. He also exhibits graphic arts work throughout the UK and internationally.

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Dr Amanda Ravetz

Amanda Ravetz is a Research Fellow and leader of the Art Research Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University (MIRIAD). She originally trained as a painter at the Central School of Art and Design and later completed a doctorate in Social Anthropology with Visual Media at the University of Manchester. She has carried out fieldwork in Britain on a housing estate, a farm, a factory, and an art school; and in India in the city of Ahmedabad. Her research interests include social aesthetics and visual anthropology; the relationship

between anthropological and artistic practices; and critical understandings of improvisation, reverie, and play. With Anna Grimshaw, she co-edited *Visualizing Anthropology: Experiments in Image-Based Practice* (2005, Intellect Books); and co-authored *Observational Cinema: anthropology, film and the exploration of social life*, published by Indiana University Press (2009).

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Cj O'Neill

Cj O'Neill is a Senior Lecturer on MA Design / Craft at Manchester School of Art, and a PhD candidate in MIRIAD. She graduated from MMU in Three Dimensional Design in 2000, going on to develop her ceramic practice through international residencies and projects in lighting and later in reworking existing ceramic objects. Her research interests include practice as research; the value of artistic intervention, both in the role of facilitator and maker; and the combination of hand and machine through industrial processing of ceramics. Recent exhibitions and projects include; Chai Patterns, part of The Pol Project, Ahmedabad, India (2010); Embracing Technology, National Craft Gallery of Ireland, Kilkenny, Ireland (2010); Transformations, Flow Gallery, London (2010); Graffiti*d, Burslem; A British Ceramics Biennale project (2009); Aynsley re*fired, Stoke; BCB commission (2008/9); Object Factory: The Art of Industrial Ceramics; Gardiner Museum, Toronto: MAD Museum, New York: Non-Object-Ive, Lodz Design Festival, Poland curated by Marek Cecula (2008/9); Wesley Meets Art, in collaboration with Special

Collections Gallery & Urbis, Manchester (2008); Kirkens Korshaer, invited artist in residence at Guldagergaard, Denmark (2008)

Cj's work has also been featured in a range of publications including; Cecula, Marek *Object Factory II: The Art of Industrial Ceramics* MAD Museum, NYC 2009; Hanaor, Ziggy(ed.) *Breaking the Mould; New Approaches in Ceramics* (Black Dog) 2007; Klanten, R(ed.); Ehmann, S.(ed.); Grill, S. (ed.) *R. Klanten, S. Ehmann, S. Grill Fragiles, Porcelain, Glass and Ceramics Gestalten* 2008; Petrie, Kevin *Printing in Ceramics* A&C Black forthcoming; Quinn, Anthony *The ceramic design course* Thames & Hudson 2007; Reyes, Fabiola; Minquet, Josep Maria *Typo...* Instituto Monsa de Ediciones 2007; teNeues *Ecological Design* teNeues Verlag GmbH + Co KG 2007; *Magazines - Crafts, Homes & Gardens*, FT, Times and Design Week

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Cindy Gould

Cindy Gould, Associate Professor, Iowa State University
I grew up in a small rural community in the state of Iowa, located in the center of the USA. As a child I was always interested in art, geography, and world cultures.

Eventually, as an adult, I moved away from my childhood community and settled two hours away in what seemed like a big city in comparison to my hometown. True, I had not moved very far geographically, but it seemed like a world away at the time. I eventually earned my BFA, MA and MFA degrees in Art and Design from Iowa State University and the University of Iowa, respectively. Studying and eventually teaching at large research universities opened doors to a whole new world.

In 1990, as an undergraduate student, I traveled to India with one of my professors. It was my first trip abroad. My childhood dream had finally come true! I fell in love with the country, its people and its culture. Since that first trip to India, I have returned seven times. Over time, I have connected with people in the art/design/craft

sectors in India and have developed an active research agenda. I have been fortunate in my collaborations with like-minded people on projects related to not only sustaining but also developing, the rich crafts heritage of India.

As a faculty member at Iowa State, I teach a variety of courses in Integrated Studio Arts within the College of Design. My own artworks have been juried into 90 exhibitions and I have given peer-reviewed papers at several international conferences. I am fortunate to be living the life I had dreamed about as a child and I am grateful to my friends and colleagues in India.

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Bhavin Kothari

Professor Bhavin Kothari is Associate Senior Faculty with Strategic Design Management discipline at National Institute of Design (NID). He is heading International Center for Indian Crafts at NID. He is also head of Intellectual Property Rights Cell at NID. Prof Kothari is a qualified Engineer-Planner and has pursued another master in Patents Law from NALSAR University of Law. Prof Kothari has generated special interest in crafts and related areas since couple of years. He has been instrumental in facilitating and generating IP awareness in designer fraternity in general and at NID in particular.

Prof Kothari has good knowledge about the emerging trends and paradigms in the field of Design Management and Intellectual Property and craft sector with a research aptitude. He undertook research study on 'Industrial Design as a Tool of Competition for Indian Industry' as part of the IPR component of TIDP project of

Government of India and European Union as an Anchor Researcher. He has written and published many papers on various subject of interests.

Prof Kothari has attended, organized and presented at many seminars including very well received five awareness generation programmes in various cities of India on 'Industrial Design Registration and protection' jointly with office of Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trademarks, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Nodal Government of Agency to implement IPR regime in India. He has been instrumental in organizing Craft Council of India National meeting in March 2011 at NID.

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Avni Varia

Avni Varia, from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India, is currently pursuing her MA in Arts and Heritage Management at London Metropolitan University. Prior to her current status, she has had extensive experience teaching and working in India. She has taught for many years at the Varia Design Centre in Ahmedabad / Rajkot, has been a visiting lecturer at the National Institute of Fashion Technology in Gandhinagar, and has taught fashion and graphic design at Wigan and Leigh College in Ahmedabad. Varia has exhibited her own creative art-works in numerous exhibits and has received training in many traditional Indian craft forms, such as natural dyeing, painting and printmaking, leather work, embroidery and appliqué. An engaging and energetic teacher, she has passed these skills onto her students. She is an Official Tourist Guide for the Government of Gujarat (a state in the northwestern part of India) and speaks Gujarat, English, Hindi, Urdu and Marathi.

An ongoing project has been her research and documentation of the traditional Varia potters community in Gujarat. One of her professional goals is to create awareness about the languishing craft of handmade

terracotta pottery objects. She vividly recalls her grandparents bringing home clay and other readily-available natural resources, which were then transformed into beautiful terracotta forms. The training she receives during her current Masters of Art in Arts and Heritage Management program of study will be beneficial as she further pursues this important research project.

Varia admires the great culture of her home country, India, and its rich heritage of arts and crafts. As a former participant / employee of several NGO's in India (non-government organizations), she is a believer in their goals and purpose. She is keenly interested in using her extensive management skills and knowledge to enhance the status of traditional craftspeople and artisans.

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Nita Thakore

A practicing textile artist (stitch), an academician (teaching art, craft and design in India), a researcher (comparative study in the specialized area of the 'Contemporary Textile Art in India' which highlights the need to enhance the status of Indian Craftpeople as well as recognize textiles as a medium for art expression), an ardent 'Yog-ART' practitioner (initiated a series of interactive, hands-on and experiential arts and crafts exhibits journeying the self and viewer towards a pathway to inner joy, good health, long and greater control over ones personal lives).....my work inspires me to delve deeper into the world of history, probing, questioning and seeking to strengthen the tether of my heritage, not with the purpose of returning to the past, but to better understand my place in the present.

I do believe that the world of 'Art' is the single most unifying force of life on earth, as history endorses it. Therefore it became natural for me to look for opportunities to integrate the 'arts' into every sphere of my personal and professional life. Arts in Education, Arts and Spirituality, Art and Health, Arts and Science etc are areas of deep interest to me.

A mainstream educational philosophy built upon a trans disciplinary approach to art and design, nurturing Craft-artistry as a significant movement, is my recent indulgence. I see myself involved in creating art works that have historical and educational value and one that provides gainful employment. I believe India's rich heritage, its spirituality and its traditional living crafts can collectively bridge the cultural gap between nations as well as provide vision, sustenance, peace and health to the entire world.

A few projects in the pipeline are
1) 'NURTURE' Interactive and Educational Art Exhibition for and by Children,
2) 'EDUeSIGN' Development of Eco-friendly cloth books for toddlers,
3) 'CRAFTArtistry' Development of a range of highly artistic mixed media 2D and 3D textile art works using traditional skills from different states of India.

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Rachel Beth Egenhoefer

Rachel Beth Egenhoefer is an artist, designer, writer, and professor. Her current research interests include: interactions between body and machine in both tangible and intangible representations of code; and how design can be used to change social norms and systems surrounding sustainability. Rachel Beth received her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and MFA from the University of California, San Diego.

Her art and design work has been exhibited and published around the world. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Design in the Department of Art + Architecture at the University of San Francisco.

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Cathy Gale

Since graduating from the RCA in 1993 Cathy has worked as a freelance graphic artist, experiential designer and has taught at FE, BA and MA level at diverse academic institutions in the UK; these include Central St.Martin's School of Art, Glasgow School of Art, Brighton University, Portsmouth University, and University of Northumbria at Newcastle. Since 2004 she has held the fractional position of Senior Lecturer and Lead tutor at Kingston University on BA (Hons) Graphic Design/ with Photography and Associate Lecture at London College of Communication on BA Graphic Product Innovation and BA Creative Advertising Strategy, and BA Graphic Media Design. Cathy is currently writing up her PhD at Brighton University (working title: 'An investigation into ambiguity as an attribute and communication device in design using X as an exemplar').

She is an active researcher and academic and has been invited to deliver papers at several conferences, including; CETLD Brighton University; 5th CLTAD international conference Berlin, Germany; FISCAR conference Helsinki, Finland; 'LeNS Sustainability Now!' Bangalore, India; 'The Word' ATypl conference Dublin, Ireland; Recto-Verso conference Lincoln, UK; 'Peripheral Visions' Kingston, UK and 'Design Activism and Social Change' later this year in Barcelona, Spain. Cathy has also been awarded the ADM-HEA Teaching Fellowship at Kingston University 2010-2011 which is concerned with collecting as creative practice across disciplines.

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Loren Schwerd

Born: 1971, NYC

Loren Schwerd received her BFA in Studio Art from Tulane University and her MFA in Sculpture in from Syracuse University. She is currently an Associate Professor of Sculpture at Louisiana State University. Recent exhibitions include: Prospect 1.5 New Orleans Biennial, the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, VA, The Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design, NC, Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, MI, Dana Women Artist

Series, Douglas Library Series, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Loren has participated in numerous artist residencies, such as the Djerassi Resident Artist Program and The Art Omi International Artist Residency. Her works have been featured in FiberArt Magazine and World Sculpture News.

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Polly McPhearson

MAPPING - JOURNEY - MOVEMENT - I am interested in the different ways in which this theme can be presented, organized and structured to create both cohesive pieces of visual composition as well as strengthening the original identity of the individual components. There are a variety of different ways in which I have successfully executed these ideas through the mixing of materials (e.g. clay & combustibles), sound investigation & film/stills to produce objects, drawings and images. Recent presentations of work include 'Presenting THE BACKS', exhibition, DEI, Exeter (Dec.'10), 'Ambulation' exhibition, Plymouth Arts Centre (Aug.'10), 'Renewal & Regeneration' exhibition, Thelma Hulbert Gallery (July'10), academic paper 'Reading THE BACKS' Creativity & Place conference, Exeter University, Geography Department (June'10), 'Cupola' Film Screening, Spacex Contemporary Art Gallery (April'10), 'Exchange' Exhibition, Avenue Gallery, Northampton (Feb.10) and Drawing Research Network Annual Conference "Observation, Mapping, Dialogue" where I was the winner of 2010 Conference Poster Prize, (Sept.10) University of Brighton.

Information

Macpherson is an Associate Professor in Design & Award Leader for the BA(Hons) Designer Maker & MA Contemporary Designer Maker in the School of Architecture, Design & Environment at the University of Plymouth. She is on the Board of Trustees for the acclaimed exhibition space for contemporary craft and design, The Devon Guild of Craftsmen and was on the panel of selectors for the 2011 Contemporary Craft Fair. She is a member of the 'Culture, Theory, Space' and 'Design Knowledge' research groups at UoP, is artist in residence at The Devon and Exeter Institute, Exeter and has recently returned to the UK after three months as Guest Professor in the Industrial Design Department, Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

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Nigel Morgan

Nigel Morgan is a composer and concert guitarist. He is visiting research fellow at Plymouth University and a member of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research. He is currently developing Active Notation, a digital environment that makes for a more dynamic relationship between performer and composer.

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Matthew Robinson

Matthew Robinson is a jazz pianist and composer studying at the Royal Academy of Music, London. An emerging performer on the contemporary jazz scene he now heads up his own five-piece ensemble. He gave the first performance of Nigel Morgan's Fifteen Images in 2009.

Alice Fox

Alice Fox is a textile artist studying Contemporary Surface Design and Textiles at Bradford School of Art and Media. She has an intense interest in the natural world and in the detail of organic things. Her acutely observed work on Fifteen Images brings digital manipulation of textile images alongside printmaking and embroidery.

MAP

The MAP is a consortium of artists producing cutting edge work in the fields of performance, creative development, facilitation and training. Its members are experienced artists making work in many of the leading arts spaces in the UK and internationally. All MAP associates are experienced artist -facilitators who draw on the visual, performing and structural arts to design and deliver creative programmes across the education, public, corporate and cultural sectors. The company works in close partnership with clients to design genuinely transformative experiences that open up new possibilities and offer tools for change. The MAP's directors are Chris Higgins Fiona Lesley and Martin Gent.

RoH: HouseWork (2006 onwards) An ongoing partnership with RoH designing and delivering their training offer to the corporate sector.

RSA/Arts Council/Peterborough City Council (2010 onwards) Facilitating, developing and mentoring artists in the region in the development of a range of applied programmes for the city.

Kettle's Yard – (2008 – 2010) A programme of creative interventions supporting the ongoing work of the team at

A focus of the Map's work over the years has been the offer of creative development for artists and practitioners across all disciplines, particularly in the areas of collaborative and applied practice. The company has led programmes in partnership with British Council India, Arts Council England, Arts and Business and Creative Partnerships. The Map has contributed to programmes with arts and performance faculties at Manchester University, Goldsmith's London, Surrey University, Central School of Speech and Drama, New York University and Obirin University, Tokyo.

Kettle's Yard around aspects such as visitor engagement, programme development, education and evaluation.

The Place – (2009 – 2010) Working across the year with the Management team of The London Centre for Contemporary Dance.

Kedja 2010 Delivered a professional development session for dancers, choreographers and producers at the Kedja conference in Sweden on the theme of sustaining creative practice.

Fiona Lesley

Fiona Lesley is a theatre practitioner, poet and artist-trainer. Currently her focus is on the development of The Map's intercultural training offer, it's leadership work and piloting Map Public Experience Art. This summer she will

be working in Italy with Map collaborator Professor Giovanni Schuima at the University Basilicata.

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Martin Gent

Martin Gent is a theatre practitioner, visual artist, designer and artist-trainer. As well as being Associate director for The Map he is Director of Creativity for Spinach, where his work includes the curation of artwork in the office space.

He recently co-wrote; *Dumb Fixity: The Impossible Question* with TC McCormack, Esther Leslie, published by Artwords Press.

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Chris Higgins

Chris Higgins is a writer, theatre practitioner, singer and artist trainer. Currently his focus is on developing The Map's leadership programmes through the medium of opera and dance, supporting creative practitioners to develop their practice, and devising new song theatre with Helen Chadwick.

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Helen Felcey

Helen Felcey coordinates the MA Design programme within Manchester School of Art. Helen studied 3D Design at the MMU before completing an MA in Ceramics at Cardiff School of Art in 2001. Since then, she has worked both in education and as a practicing artist, exhibiting nationally and internationally. Recent collaborative exhibitions & projects, such as 'Place Settings' with Alice Kettle and the collaborative project

'Pairings' at Manchester School of Art have defined new directions in her educational and artistic practice. Helen is also Chair of the National Association for Ceramics in Higher Education (NACHE), co-organising the graduate exhibition 'FRESH' with the British Ceramics Biennial.

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Steve Dixon

Professor Stephen Dixon studied Fine Art at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Ceramics at the Royal College of Art, graduating in 1986. His early exhibitions in London with Contemporary Applied Arts and the Crafts Council established a reputation for figurative ceramics with a biting political and social satire. Anatol Orient introduced Dixon's work to the U.S.A. in the early nineteen nineties, resulting in solo exhibitions at Pro-Art, St. Louis (1993) Garth Clark Gallery, New York (1995) and Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York (1998).

Dixon combines studio ceramics with regular public and community projects; in 2000 he received an Arts Council 'Year of the Artist' award for a collaborative project with Amnesty International and Kosovan refugees, and in 2009 was commissioned to produce the ceramic sculpture 'Monopoly' for the British Ceramic

Biennial in Stoke-on-Trent.

Dixon is currently engaged as Professorial Research Fellow in Contemporary Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University, investigating political narrative and the contemporary printed image. He was recently engaged as the first artist-in-residence in the new Ceramic Galleries at the V&A.

His work features in numerous public and private collections, including the Museum of Arts & Design, New York; The Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the British Crafts Council; San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts; The Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; and Manchester Art Gallery.

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Alex McErlain

Recently retired lecturer in Ceramics at Manchester Metropolitan University, Alex is a potter who has been working extensively in partnership with Alice Kettle on collaborative artworks which eventually led to setting up the 'Pairings' project. Alex has a wide range of research interests, he has made many films which have been shown at various international ceramic festivals, most recently 'Hollyford Harvest' a film about the potter Doug Fitch, which will be screened at a Spanish film festival in June. He has curated numerous exhibitions and currently has 'Honest Pots' on display at York Art Gallery.

He is the author of 'The Art of Throwing' Crowood press and regularly contributes to ceramic journals. His work is represented in a number of public collections including Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, Manchester Art Gallery, (collaborative work with Alice Kettle), Manchester Metropolitan University and The York Museums Trust.

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